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Z A R A :

A P O E M O F T H E S E A .

LONDON:
BAYLIS AND LEIGHTON,
JOHNSON'S-COURT, FLEET-STREET.

Z A R A :

OR,

THE BLACK DEATH.

A POEM OF THE SEA.

BY THE AUTHOR OF

“ N A U F R A G U S . ”

“ Ships are but boards; sailors but men; there be land rats and there be water rats; water thieves and land thieves;—I mean pirates; and then there is the peril of the waters, winds, and rocks.”

MERCHANT OF VENICE.

— “ Nay, I prithee, take it:
It is an earnest of a future good
That I mean to thee.”

CYMBELINE.

LONDON :

PUBLISHED BY WHITTAKER AND CO.
AVE-MARIA-LANE.

1833.



18
1785

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
DEDICATION	vii
PREFACE	ix
CANTO I.	1
Notes to Canto I.	49
CANTO II.	61
Notes to Canto II.	109
CANTO III.	125
Notes to Canto III.	167
CANTO IV.	175
Notes to Canto IV.	215



TO
THE HONOURABLE
MRS. LEICESTER F. STANHOPE,
OF
“ THE CEDARS,”
PUTNEY,
SURREY.

MADAM :

Twelve years have now elapsed since my arrival in this country from India; and during that period I have enjoyed, without interruption, the distinguished happiness of your acquaintance. You were then the source and soul of enjoyment to those whom you honoured with your friendship; your own happiness consisted in contributing to that of others; and, I may truly say, you were beloved by all who had the happiness to know you. Time has winged its way, and you are still the same,—unaltered in your virtues and unspoiled by the world. Of your friends, may he, especially, who is possessed of such a treasure, live many years to enjoy its worth; and may that little innocent, who owns you

by the endearing appellation of Mother, prove a present delight and future solace.

I now, Madam, take the liberty of dedicating this volume to you, in the hope that you will consider it, what it unaffectedly is, a genuine offering of respect for your virtues, and admiration of your talents; as well as a pure but humble testimony of grateful acknowledgment for the numerous acts of kindness which you have been pleased to confer upon me.

I have the honour to be,

MADAM,

Your most obedient,

and devoted

humble servant,

THE AUTHOR.

P R E F A C E.

THE reluctance which, on my first introduction to the public, I evinced to prefix a Preface to my work, was overcome by an apparent necessity: I now again plead necessity as the reason for availing myself of an author's privilege.

The objects I have in view, in sending this volume into the world, are manifold. The primary one is, to keep myself in the eye of that public from which I have already experienced so favourable a reception; of course presenting myself under a form which, although new, will not conceal that in which I received the kindness. A secondary object is, to depict in permanent colours, (fearful ambition!) impressions which are forcibly retained on my mind, of some of the many beauties and sublimities,

ever varying, and always interesting, of a sea voyage. These impressions, together with delineations of marine scenery, I have endeavoured to embody in the present poetic tale, some incidents of which, however apparently improbable, are deduced from real life.

Cradled in the world,—schooled on the ocean,—the only merit I lay the remotest claim to, (whatever further meed of praise the public may award,) lies in the nautical portion of the work, which, (and here I speak with some confidence,) will be found in the main correct. Even in this respect, however, some errors may have escaped me; and, should they meet the eye of the nautical critic, I shall feel thankful for his corrections.

As to the general composition of the Poem, let it be borne in mind that this is a first attempt; and a first attempt, even in prosaic literature, is entitled to, and, in my case, has received, indulgence: but, in the lofty and hazardous path of poesy, the aspirant stands

in need of peculiar encouragement and support. This my appeal will, I feel assured, not be made in vain.

In connexion with the composition, I must just advert to the metre. I have chosen the Spenserian stanza; and a comparison *may*, by possibility, be instituted, which I shrink from. I am not vain enough to suppose that I shall be accused of imitating Byron: but, if in any instance this may appear to have been my intention, I protest that the resemblance is absolutely casual, and can be a resemblance of form only. I have adopted that stanza because I consider it the best adapted to narrative and descriptive poetry.

It was an observation of GÖETHE, that any person disposed to write an entertaining and useful book, may choose his subject from almost any thing he sees, hears, or meets with in the daily occurrences of life, be his occupation what it may; and that, he who succeeds in depicting those occurrences in a way to interest, performs a meritorious act,—to society even a

beneficial one. If I quote Göethe for the purpose of deprecating criticism as to my choice of a subject, I lay myself open to all the censure which is implied in the converse of the second member of his proposition, — that failure is disgrace.

London,

ERRATA.

CANTO I.—Stanza LXXI., 8th line, for *he* read *be*.

Stanza LXXIX., 5th line, for *buzy* read *busy*.

II.—Stanza LXXIX., 5th line, for *lost* read *tost*.

III.—Stanza V., 1st line, for *Donolds* read *Dollonds*'.



Z A R A.



CANTO I.



I.

'Twas noon of night, as o'er the western sea,
A trading bark was bound for India's shore ;
The voice of seamen and their cheering glee,
Broke on the stillness the wide ocean wore ;
The winds were hushed ; the calm sea sullenly,
As if some wayward ill her bosom tore,
Heav'd her dumb complaints in undulating swells,
Like to the breast where silent passion dwells.

II.

The sky was gemm'd with clouds (1) that like the sea,
Were wrapt in sullen gloom, as if they staid,
Some soon expected mandate to be free,
To scud the space they then but overlaid;
The stars were lost in dim immensity;
The moon was hid, and chary as a maid;
No sound was heard save tales of love and slaughter,
And one long song about a—farmer's daughter. (2)

III.

The sounds thus breaking on the stillness round,—
From the fore part of the forecastle came;
Where some few sailors o'er their grog were found,
Heedless of anything save fun or fame;
To them the world was but a tinkling sound;
Their sole ambition a good sailor's name;
Their thoughts were all of grog—of war—or love,
Of ghosts and omens from the sky above.

IV.

The vessel yaw'd and roll'd in sluggish way,
The leviathan of the dreary deep ;
She seemed a thing endued with life that lay,
Secure and tranquil on the sea asleep ;
Against her masts her sails flapp'd lazily ;
And o'er them you might see the cordage creep,
As creeping plants on India's soil that stay,
The pilgrim's weary footstep on his way.

V.

Abaft there lay some sailors nine or ten,
The afterguard of the first watch they were,
Who seemed to sleep as they lay scattered then,
As if no more to wake to this world's care ;
They slept the sleep of tars—a race of men,
Who sleep whene'er they can or any where ;
But few can tell the blissful state of sleep,
That seal the sailor's lids when on the deep.

VI.

The gun and orlop decks were crowded quite,
With hammocks neatly slung in parallel lines ;
In all there lay three hundred souls that night,
As dead to sense as were the sleeping winds ;
Hush'd was all sound save stifled sobs of fright,
That came from dreaming wives or infants' whines ;
The wives of young recruits the women were,
Whose dream was love, whose waking sense—was care.(3)

VII.

The long drawn chorus of the song still rung,
A jovial peal of mimic harmony ;
But all were heedless what was said or sung,
Save one who in the hammock nettings lay,
Silent yet wakeful as a hawk among,
Her brood of nurslings eager for the prey ;
His eye was every where,(4)—and his whole mind,
Intent on omens of a rising wind.

VIII.

'Twas Stanton the chief mate ;—a seaman ne,
Inured to peril from his earliest day ;
His home a ship—his favorite theme the sea,
He heeded naught besides—nor what should sway,
The world's renown, or fate's unkind decree ;
The rough or smooth with him soon passed away ;
His visage was most noble, and his eye,
Was bright as ever flash'd 'tween sea and sky.

IX.

The midnight hour scarce had passed away,
When near a cabin-window's burnished side,
A sylph-like maiden beautiful as May,
Sat calmly gazing on the ocean wide ;
Her lily cheek on her fair hand she lay ;
And gently sigh'd yet knew not why she sigh'd,
She loved but one, nor ever loved another,
The one who near her slept—her widowed mother.

X.

ZARA it was : Her father was no more,
A prisoned tenant of a mould of clay ;
His soul had left its mortal coil to soar,
The boundless regions of eternal day ;
The light of life she saw the day before,
Her father's spirit fled from earth away ;
He fought and died for fame, and found it too,
On the fam'd field of blood-stained Waterloo.

XI.

His dawning vision in a tent first gleam'd ;
His youthful years in Toprabanas' isle, (5)
Were cheerless fretted till kind fortune beam'd,
A ray of pleasure lit by Cupid's smile ;
'Twas then fair ZARA's mother he redeemed,
From captive bonds when young and free from guile ;
Her native land and all she cherished dear,
She left for THEODORE—without a tear.

XII.

She young and pretty was, and rather fair,
Compared with other dames of her own town ;
And though so young her glossy soft jet hair,
Reached from her forehead to her ancle down ;
Light as a fawn her movements graceful were ;
Sweet was her smile, but terrible her frown ;
Yet did the lustre of her large dark eyes,
A transport beam you fain would idolize.

XIII.

Her dress was chaste and neat—yet tastefully,
Adapted to her clime ; that is to say,
She wore no caps (nor would she when at sea ;)
Nor bonnets either, rarely a tight stay ;
A muslin vest thrown o'er her gracefully,
In ample folds comprised her dress by day ;
Concealing all herself—save eyes and nose,
Her neat bare ancles, tiny feet,—and toes.

XIV.

To Britain's shore he bore his youthful treasure,
Where for a while they breathed—they lived—on love!
But love when true like every earthly pleasure,
Is sure to meet with crosses from above ;
And doubtless for our welfare—in some measure,
Or else the eyes had best beware to rove ;
For true it is, and pity 'tis in sooth,
“True love's a stream that never does run smooth.”

XV.

Each morning did his lovely goddess smile,
A Paradise to his enamoured soul ;
’Twas her endearments only could beguile,
A melancholy he could scarce control ;
But one caress of hers, would, for a-while,
His inmost care—his heart's “fell-sting,” condole ;
Yet still he'd sigh, and soothing to her say,
“Duty sweet love—will call me soon away.”

XVI.

'Twas so:—The Hero of the “ Iron Crown,”
Who rose by fame, and by ambition fell ;
The idol once of fortune, till its frown,
Dash'd from his brow the crown he won so well ;
Had fled from Elba, and its little town,
Nor deigned the Briton his intention tell ;
So angered England rushed again to arms ;
Gaul—mad with joy—certain kings,—with qualms.

XVII.

The trump of war resounded thro' the land ;
The spirit stirring fife and hollow drum,
Drew in their noisy train a motley band,
Of ragged urchins ; and the day had come,
The pomp of war and music's magic wand,
The tocsin knell'd of fatal strife to some ;
Leading a corps of infantry was seen,
The gay young THEODORE—all clad in green.

XVIII.

The day before he parted with his bride,
In a fair way—'ere long—to be a mother,
'Twas the first time he ever did her chide ;
And then but mildly, 'cause she did not smother,
Moans unsuppressed, and tears she could not hide,
Nor cease to tell, she loved him, and no other ;
He pressed his weeping partner to his breast,
And breathed a prayer for her, whom he caressed.

XIX.

The last embrace of those we dearly love,
Whene'er we dare not hope to meet again,
The dread distrust that o'er the features rove,
When bursts the sigh the breast can ne'er retain ;
The farewell lisp,—and look,—the last remove,
Of sympathizing souls in fondness twain ;
The climax constitutes of human woe,
And damps the love of life where'er we go.

XX.

Young THEODORE, adored his friendless bride ;
He heard her farewell words of tenderness,
In English such that some would perhaps deride,
But such as well portrayed her sore distress,
And swell'd his bosom as a bursting tide,
And made him wish almost she loved him less ;
The last endearing words he heard her say,
Were, “ come back—soon back—or go not away.”

XXI.

Prolixity I hate ; so now I'll tell,
The fate that soon young THEODORE befel ;
He bravely fought, and fighting—sudden fell,
Shot through the heart ; the cannon roar, his knell ;
He died without a groan, and it was well ;
For dying moans could scarcely then impel,
The heart of friendship e'en, to give relief,
Or listen to a dying comrade's grief.

XXII.

Kind Heaven in his absence soothed his bride,
And dried her tears, and healed her bleeding heart ;
ZARA was born before her father died,
And to her bleeding bosom did impart,
A balm to sweet oblivion allied,
And so disarm'd the sting of sorrow's dart ;
Still the young widow had as yet to know,
The sad extent of her most dire woe.

XXIII.

The morn was mild that ushered in the tale,
Of THEODORE's doom ; 'twas told her by a friend ;
And met by shrieks, and many a piercing wail,
So loud and long as if they ne'er would end ;
For oriental ladies seldom fail,
To weep aloud the woe their bosoms rend ;(6)
The shock once o'er, howe'er, they soon regain,
Their lost composure, and forget the pain.

XXIV.

Some years since this had sped their fleety way,
When ZARA's mother breathed a last adieu,
To Britain's coast ; in hopes to see the day,
Of youthful joys restored, and to renew,
Her native customs long gone to decay,
Yet ever cherished dear ; for well she knew,
Cold England's humid clime ill suited her,
Or ZARA either—her lovely daughter. (7)

XXV.

This brings me to the epoch of my tale,
That ZARA fair, was gazing on the sea ;
And the digress, I trust, will not curtail,
The testy critic's meed of praise to me ;
My readers, I presume, will scarcely fail,
To view the explication favourably ;
Indeed, without it they might wonder where,
The ladies came from, and why they were there.

XXVI.

Fair ZARA, as I said, gazed on the sea ;
Her golden hair in clust'ring ringlets fell,
O'er forehead classic to sublimity ;
Her penciled eyebrows dark became her well ;
And graced her long eye-lashes prettily ;
They seemed swift harbingers of thought, that swell,
The soul to tenderness ; while thro' her eyes,
Soft beam'd the charm all men so dearly prize.

XXVII.

'Tis not the fiery eye—the leer,—the roll—
That wield the charm us men so dearly prize ;
It is the vivid radiance of the soul,
Revealing hidden wishes through the eyes ;
Too true to nature e'er to brook control,
Or quench the latent fires as they rise ;
Perhaps 'tis well, this charming eye is rare ;
Where e'er 'tis seen, delight still lingers there.

XXVIII.

In my young days 'twas my auspicious lot,
To gaze on beauty, but without much harm ;
Till suddenly I've winced as one—just shot,
When o'er me glanced the eye that had this charm ;
Nor is that glance so easily forgot ;
The bosom long will thrill with love's alarm ;
'Tis terrible in love, as shot in war,
And may be called, I think, the—*je ne sais quoi*.

XXIX.

ZARA was slender made, and rather tall,
Endowed with charms most Indian ladies are ;
That is, her hands and feet were very small,
Extremely bland and graceful was her air ;
In her affections warm, indeed, to all,
Who spoke her kind, or felt for her a care ;
And when she griev'd her bosom half concealed,
Bespoke such charms that cannot be revealed.

XXX.

She still gazed o'er the dead calm swelling sea ;
And as she gazed she thought of Britain's shore ;
Of friends who cheered her youth so smilingly,
But whom perhaps she never might see more ;
She thought of purling streams, the willow tree,
And fields of green she loved to ramble o'er ;
And other thoughts stole o'er her youthful mind,
But all of innocent and girlish-kind.

XXXI.

It seemed as if a seraph in the sky,
In pity to such loveliness alone,
Had view'd her with a kindred's tender eye,
As one whose soul was spotless as its own ;
The clouds dispersing as a veil passed by ;—
The moon and stars in vicing lustre shone ;
The scene in short was changed in every way,
And murky midnight glittered light as day.

XXXII.

The twinkling stars illumed the clear blue sky
In gorgeous brilliancy profuse but grand,
Beyond compare with those that greet the eye,
In arctic regions or in England ;
Their glittering orbs to view, I know not why,
Impels the wings of fancy to expand,
To unseen worlds, of pure extatic bliss,
Unknown to dull mortality in this.

XXXIII.

The silvery placid moon high pois'd in space,
Displayed her shining light unsparingly ;
And, with the stars, her fair full modest face,
Were seen reflected on the ocean glaringly ;
As if a looking-glass were there to trace,
The bark and seamen on the glossy sea ;
The deadly calm still reign'd, no cloud was seen,
The sea a tint now wore of palish green. (8)

XXXIV.

There fish of various hue, but chiefly gay,
Were sportive seen to glide in amorous play ;
The albicore, appeared a darkish grey,
The small boneta green ; and as the ray,
Of starlight strikes upon them they display,
A hue refulgent as they glide sideway,
That glitters with a changeful radiant power,
'Tis sweet to contemplate at midnight hour.

XXXV.

The dolphin too his amorous sport began,
And in his wake a shark passed slowly on ;
Nosing his pilot fish, who led the van,
In seeming grave solicitude to con,
Whether a dead body or a tin can
Was the next *morceau* he could dine upon ;
But he was caught next day—cut up—boiled—and—ate,
The doctor kept his backbone, his jawbone the mate.

XXXVI.

And many more there were I need not class ;
The ugly devil—and the flying fish,
Who meet a foe poor things where'er they pass ;
(They make when stew'd a most delicious dish ;)
Their flights as ours often meet, (alas !)
A termination contra to the wish ;
Pursued by finny foes they tempt the air,
To fall a prey to hungry sea birds there.

XXXVII.

Our ZARA viewed these beauties with delight ;
The reigning stillness pleasingly serene,
Responded with her girlish musings quite ;
She wondered if the silver moon were seen,
By friends she left in Westmorland, so bright ;
(But they were young girls—scarcely one sixteen ;)
At length she weary grew ; she drooped her head,
And then disrob'd herself—and went to bed.

XXXVIII.

Disrob'd she was, asleep too in her bed ;
And where angelic maid I fain leave thee ;
Not for a kingdom would I have it said,
That I could e'er invade thy sanctity ;
But if—aye, *if*,—aside the veil were laid,
And eye, unseen, could rove luxuriously ;
Supposing, too, the naughty eye were—mine,
I'd naught reveal, believe me,—not a line.

XXXIX.

No more the chorus of the song went round ;
The hollow sounding bell had stricken eight ; (9)
The “ starholines ” (10) were rous'd from sleep profound,
Their turn now to relieve each weary mate,
Of the first watch ; who heard the tinkling sound,
With greeting sweet and spirits quite elate ;
And so the changing world fulfils its round ;
Fresh hands arise,—the old—sleep underground.

XL.

The next and following day there was no wind ;
In vain the sailor strained his eager sight,
A breeze or ripple on the sea to find ;
Naught met the eye save burning sun-beams bright,
And far away a splash of furious kind,
That proved on nearer view to be a fight,
Between a wieldy sword fish and a whale,
Who lash'd the sea to surges with his tail.

XLI.

The sailors were engaged in various ways ;
In picking oakum, washing decks—and one,
Poor weakly youth had once seen happier days,
But who of hopes to see again—had none ;
Some sigh'd for home ; and others craved to raise,
Their languid spirits with a little rum ;
The boatswains' hands were sitting up the rigging,
The cuddy gents., were port and claret swigging.

XLII.

Next night a novel scene I must relate,
 Ensued between MARIA, ZARA's maid,
And a young saucy midshipman nam'd TATE,
 (Who always was a "wayward wight," 'twas said;) (11)
MARIA's native place—was Cripple-gate;
 And charms she had, but they began to fade;
Indeed she was of rather doubtful age,
But very sly—and grave—as any sage.

XLIII.

The youth had doubtless something to reveal,
 Of purport pleasing to the cunning maid;
Something, perhaps, conducive to her weal,
 But little to her fancy—if delayed;
So 'neath the guise of midnight's drowsy seal,
 The pair conversed, (nor needed foreign aid;)
On kind confiding subjects we'll suppose,
For long they *causer'd* as 'twere, nose to nose.

XLIV.

Concealed was he and quiet as the dead,
While she—poor soul—abash'd and half afraid,
Snug through her cabin window peered her head,
To hearken to the whispered nothings said ;
The youth at last by wayward venture led,
To sip a chaste salute,—a false step made,
And fell *sans ceremonie* into the sea,
Just abaft the larboard quarter-gallery. (12)

XLV.

He fell so lightly in the slumbering sea,
No one o'erheard the splash ; and when he rose,
He sadly fear'd his doom that night would be,
In Ocean's bed to take his final doze ;
And then he blamed his folly bitterly,
And wished the girl—in Heaven—I suppose ;
He stoutly swam, and after no slight pains,
He seized with ardent gripe the rudder chains.

XLVI.

The rudder gain'd he gladly sat astride,
And holla'd loud for help but was not heard ;
While poor MARIA wrung her hands and cried,
With wild affright but dared not say a word ;
Her spotless fame she thought might be belied,
Or doubts of her morality inferred ;
She also fear'd the youth would soon expire,
And then she screamed for aid in accents dire.

XLVII.

Her loud alarms soon brought a host of eyes ;
A young poop boy with hagard cheek and wan,
First heard the frightened youth's imploring cries,
And told the marvel news to all the clan ;
In short, he up was hauled 'mid strange surmise,
And pale and wan almost, as a dead man ;
Had a breeze sprung up, or a sly shark passed,
This converzatione—had been his last.

XLVIII.

The dull dead calm still reigned in sluggish way ;
The superstitious feelings of a few,
Found vent in murmurs deep from day to day ;
'Twas thought a Jonas was among the crew ;
And some had the temerity to say,
Who was the Jonas they were sure they knew ;
But all agreed so very long a calm,
A sure precursor was of coming harm.

XLIX.

Another omen thro' the ship then spread ;
A Persian cat—a favorite on board—
Three kittens littered, one without a head ;
Poor puss was drown'd tho' some her fate deplor'd ;
And then the boatswain confidently said,
A dusky cloud to the so-east had lour'd,
And ere the full moon rose they'd have a breeze,
Which set the minds of half the crew at ease.

L.

The boatswain's sage prediction proved too true ;
A breeze did come, the evening of that day,
So fierce, the seamen well the change might rue,
And cease to wish the good old calm, away ;
'Twas in the middle watch, when all the crew,
(Save the first mate,) in quiet slumber lay,
The bark was ta'en aback, with what they call,
In tropic seas—or China—a—*white squall*. (13)

LI.

The screaming blast the welkin fiercely hurl'd ;
The ocean shewed her foamy troubled crest,
In fiery flakes of hissing brine that curl'd,
In vivid glares wher'ere the eye could rest ;
The sails aback the masts were densely whirl'd ;
The helmsman was alert and did his best ;
But ere the helm was up, the topmasts went—
Over the side, her courses too were rent.

LII.

'Tis terrible to hear the deaf'ning brawl,
Of sailors and their officers at sea,
Just on the onset of a storm or squall,
When falls the creaking, heavy lurch, to lee ;
It seems a death yell wafted over all—
A summons dire to eternity ;
While howls so wild and fiendish rend the air,
You'd think a host of demons revell'd there.

LIII.

The boatswain summon'd every tar on deck,
And fierce and dismal was the billows' roar ;
Amid the din the sailors cleared the wreck,
And patient thro' the night their labour bore ;
Affrighted ZARA o'er her mother's neck,
Confessed the dread her panting bosom tore ;
The tender lady ridiculed her fears,
Fondled her pet, and dried her flowing tears.

LIV.

The vessel bore away before the squall,
At the fleet rate of fourteen knots an hour ; (14)
As howl'd the wind and waves, the sailors call
In hoarse behests was often heard to lour ;
The sky a gloomy darkness frown'd o'er all ;
And then there fell a sudden pelting shower,
Of heavy hail that patter'd down as fast, (15)
As for a wager they were downward cast.

LV.

A settled rain then drenched the weary crew,
For three dark days and nights or thereabout,
And every man and boy was quite wet through,
The rain still pouring like a water-spout ;
The dense dark scud swift as an eagle flew ;
And 'tween their dusky way the moon peep'd out ;
The howling breeze in hollow murmurs bore,
The vessel thro' the gushing surges' roar.

LVI.

At sea 'tis wretched on a rainy day ;
And yet it cannot rightly be inferred,
The sailors mind it ; I have heard some say,
A sailor is a kind of water bird,
Who dries his jacket by the fair sun's ray ;
But never in my travels have I heard,
A dainty landsman say he liked the sea,
Whene'er the decks were wet and slippery.

LVII.

'Tis not surpassing snug I must confess,
To tread the deck when slippery and wet,
And gaze upon the water's wilderness,
And view the bubbles on the ocean met ;
To grasp wet cordage—the rain pitiless,
Down pouring o'er you like a rivulet ;
But casual ills as these, and many more,
E'en landsmen will endure for—yellow ore.

LVIII.

The rain in torrents bath'd the reeking bark,
All thro' the night and on the following day ;
And like the bark of yore—(I mean—Noah's ark,)
She bore the drench and bore the billows sway ;
The next night brought a gale, and was pitch dark,
And fierce and lofty beat the dashing spray ;
But no matter ! new masts were up and rigg'd,
And man and boy a dram of arrack swigg'd.

LIX.

The gale and rain next day completely ceased ;
And then there rose a light yet settled air,
From the north east, and all on board were pleased ;
It was, as sailor's say, directly—" fair ;"
The heavy lurches of the ship were eas'd ;
And mirth and music reign'd, instead of care ;
In short, she sailed as pleasant and serene,
As pleasure yachts on Father Thames are seen.

LX.

The light air freshen'd, and at length assum'd

A steady breeze ; the sails were quickly spread ;

And, as the moon and stars the sea illum'd,

Each wave was seen to curl its ripply head ;

The air with balmy fragrance was perfum'd ;

And the ship's shadow on the ocean sped,

In seeming rapidness just o'er the lee,

As gliding o'er the fleet foam merrily.

LXI.

They bore away exactly south-south-west,

Teneriffe passing the preceding week,

Soaring above the clouds its tap'ring crest,

Of constant snow 'mid hollow blasts and bleak ;

Some pirates, it was rumour'd did infest,

The southern seas to prey upon the weak ;

So night and day they kept a sharp look-out,

But not a sail appear'd to cross their route.

LXII.

The nights were beautiful—so were the days ;
The fiery sun in radiant splendour rose,
Diffusing far and wide his golden rays,
And lull'd the troubled ocean to repose ;
The crew were occupied in various ways,
But all were joyous, and forgot their woes ;
The soldiers' wives—their husbands too, indeed,
Were pleas'd as lawyers are, when paid, or fee'd.

LXIII.

The ladies now were rob'd with all the art
Of female grace,—delighted, and delighting ;
Their ev'ry smile and gesture did impart,
A pleasing charm—to sailors quite inviting ;
Their very laugh seem'd echoed from the heart—
A voice of merriment and love uniting ;
Certes on deck, at sea, the prettiest sight,
Is ladies walking, on a moon-light night.

LXIV.

The cuddy is a kind of mess-room, where
The captain does the “honours” of the table,
In other words he’s pleased to take the “chair,”
And sometimes aims at—wit, if he is able;
But e’en the best of them we may compare,
(That is with few exceptions,) to the fable;
I mean the donkey in the lion’s skin,
Who bray’d but once—and thus confessed his kin.

LXV.

I say with few exceptions;—there are some
Exceeding witty fellows in their way;
But under Neptune’s trident they become,
As rough and lordly as the billow’s sway;
And so reserved—you’d almost think’em dumb,
Or sullen dolts who know not what to say;
But like the world—some smooth there are—some rough,
Some too much feeling have—some not enough.

LXVI.

The cuddy furnished was in princely way ;
 Its deck a costly Brussels carpet lined ;
And on the pannels flash'd a bright display,
 Of polish'd arms in crescent forms entwined ;
The costly sideboards splendid were, and gay,
 And on them massive plate, and china shined ;
With three sea views with birds upon the wing,
By HUGGINS done, now painter to the King.

LXVII.

The table kept was sumptuous I must say ;
 Hot rolls had they for breakfast and bohea,
Cold fowl and ham and jellies—every day,
 With cocoa, eggs new laid, and rich coffee.
At dinner, viands reeking savoury,—
 Rich soups—pulaws—old wines and ratifie ;
But one fine morning---('twas a sad mishap,)
A cup of hot tea fell on ZARA'S—*lap*.

LXVIII.

Then rose the blush in crimson flashes o'er,
Her ivory neck in eloquent display ;
Some thirty gentlemen were there or more,
And what was whispered round I will not say ;
But certes 'tis, the *petit affaire* tore,
Poor ZARA's breast to tortures all that day ;
In truth—the ship just gave a naughty lurch ;
Before as steady, almost, as a church.

LXIX.

There's something charming in the crimson hue,
Of maiden blushes and the downcast eye ;
The inmost thought seems half revealed to view ;
And did not pity interpose a sigh,
There are of men I fear but very few,
Who would not gaze, and gazing—deify ;
But save the savage of the wilderness,
Whoe'er could torture beauty in distress ?

LXX.

But to proceed ; the breeze continued fair,
And onward bore the bark from day to day ;
Nearing the stormy Cape of Afric, where
The sceptred storm maintains terrific sway ;(16)
And where, at night, the sailors still declare,
The flying Dutchman's seen off Table-Bay ;(17)
Disporting in the storm his flying kites,
And mann'd with blanch'd and terrifying sprights.

LXXI.

This may be true, as certainly may not ;
The times are altered since the world begun ;
The miracles of old seem near forgot,
And many deem the phantom age, quite done ;
And so believed the late Sir Walter Scott ;(18)
He differed with the learn'd doctor—Johnson ;
Who thought with Addison, that sprights have been,
And may he still, tho' somewhat rarely seen.

LXXII.

A breeze, like ladies' favours, will decline ;
In this uncertain world we ever find,
The sweets of pleasure fleeting as sunshine,
And cheering hope deceitful as the wind;
Thus smiles and frowns too frequently combine,
To solace and perplex the sanguine mind ;
Until the last, sad scene, relieves all care,
Once in the grave—there's no disquiet there.

LXXIII.

The breeze before so pleasant and so fair,
Now died away ; and was succeeded by
A light and bland but variable air,
With certain indications in the sky,
Of coming rain ; and water-spouts were there, (19)
Based on the ocean—soaring sleek and high,
Just like a trumpet of unearthly size,
From ocean's surface tow'ring to the skies.

LXXIV.

Again our bark made very little way,
The dying air veering to the southward ;
So that the vessel was, as sailors say,
“ Close on a wind,” her larboard tacks on board ;
Her sails flapp’d idly ’gainst each mast and stay,
And gathering clouds above them darkly lour’d ;
Until at night their surcharg’d founts gushed down,
In torrents such as ’twere our bark to drown.

LXXV.

And this was fortunate ; the harrass’d crew,
Had languish’d long in troublesome distress,
For water, and had quite enough to do,
To slake their stimulated thirsts, far less
To cook their favourite dish—an Irish stew ;
But murmurings at sea you’d best suppress ;
There, redress of grievances are limited,
And grumbling, expressly is prohibited.

LXXVI.

The least disposed their murmurs to suppress—

The most averse to lenient control—

The most determined to be comfortless—

And deaf to every effort of condole,

To temporize the evil of distress,—

Were the poor soldiers' wives ; and it was droll,

To see the smiles produced by pouring rain,

Their husbands tried, but tried in vain, to gain.

LXXVII.

On deck the awnings fore and aft were spread ;

And they, (the better to admit the rain,) —

Were pierc'd with rents, compressed with shot and lead,

The water gushing—as from a fountain ;

The women and the children then were fed,

With tea, pea-soup, and Irish stew again ;

The females in particular were pleased,

Until the rain very suddenly, ceased.

LXXVIII.

Scarce had the sun beams glittered smilingly,
When sound of distant firing broke upon
The lambent air, apparently to lee ;
And, as the shade of sable night drew on,
The rumbling peal resounded o'er the sea,
In murmurs hollow as from large cannon ;
'Twas not till late at night the solemn roar,
Was hush'd, and all was quiet as before.

LXXIX.

Two sailor boys were sent aloft to scan,
The ocean round before the sun had set,
And as they up the rigging nimbly ran,
And ere their eyes the distant waters met,
The buz of buzzy whisperings began,
To spread on deck ; for most on board as yet,
To cannon's roar were new, unless in jest,
And some then thought that kind of firing best.

LXXX.

The boys were pleased as they could wish to be ;
They ran aloft with gay and merry faces ;
But as the captain keenly eyed the sea,
His visage wore of thought profound, strong traces ;
His restless step betrayed anxiety ;
And stern he was, as frequently the case is
With sea commanders whene'er symptoms rise,
Of coming ill, or danger by surprise.

LXXXI.

His short suspense was very soon allay'd ;
The ready hail was made—" No sail in sight !"
The boys, however, on the cross-trees staid,
To keep their willing watch until the night,
Her curtain closed upon the day decayed,
Concealing objects from the vision quite ;
All then was speculation and surmise,
From whence and why the firing could arise.

LXXXII.

'Twas thought by some a contest had ensued,
Between a British cruizer and a slaver ;
And through the night the darkly sea was view'd,
With eager eye by almost all—save her
Of angel form and seraph mind endued—
I mean our lovely heroine—ZARA ;
Of ill regardless as a gentle dove,
She sigh'd for naught besides her mother's love.

LXXXIII.

Her cabin was a marine paradise,
Bedeck'd with smiles ; the eye with transport greets
Enow of life's allurements to suffice
The youthful heart with gladness when it beats ;
Herself a gem an anchorite might 'tice,
His cell to quit to court less holy sweets ;
And she, like all her sex, (the young I mean),
Believ'd the buds of bliss were—" ever-green."

LXXXIV.

She knew not bliss, withheld her angel smile,
When days of youth and innocence were past ;
She never dream'd 'twas tedious to beguile
A passing day, when her's all flew so fast ;
She never thought the vapours or the bile,
Would e'er with clouds her pretty brow o'ercast ;
Far less could she tell, when youth was fled,
The senses slept in apathy's dull bed.

LXXXV.

Not always gay was she, but took delight,
To listen mournful to the sea-breeze sigh ;
To watch the swift approach of lovely night, (20)
The rolling waves in myriads amble by,
Tinged with the silv'ry streaks of sheen moonlight,
And shrouded by the clear blue starry sky,
And hearken to the foamy gushing surge,
That 'neath her cabin-window would emerge.

LXXXVI.

'Twas then enthusiasm's magic power,
 Would raise a second Eden in her breast ;
And then, she'd seize her harp, at midnight hour,
 (Whene'er her mother had not ta'en her rest),
And as a vestal in a lonely bower,
 Would chant a requiem for the distress'd ;
Her lay was solemn—but exceeding sweet ;
'Twould make your heart with pious fervour beat.

LXXXVII.

And oft the sailors of the watch would listen,
 With uncouth pleasure to the silver sounds ;
Many—a young and brightened eye would glisten,
 With transport such that almost knew no bounds,
And such that e'en the watch-call could not lessen ;
 For they love music where'er it abounds ;
And other sweets less pure in their droll way,
But hard's their toil, and short's their pleasure day.

LXXXVIII.

At other times her harp aside she'd lay ;
And when the night was very light and mild,
Would think of words she'd heard her mother say,
(For she was quite imagination's child),
And those of others vers'd in worldly way,
And skill'd in abstruse things of every kind,
From whom she learnt the moon and heavenly host,
Were peopled worlds in countless numbers lost.

LXXXIX.

And as she view'd the full moon in the sky,
She thought what goodly beauties might be there ;
What sightly woods on mountains towering high,
What purling brooks in happy valleys----where,
The pleasure-tear might moisten many an eye,
Alike undew'd with anguish, as with care ;
Then o'er her harp-strings would her fingers bound,
And sweetly would the plaintive strains resound.

XC.

And sweetly pleasing proved the moments when—
 'Mid soothing reverie and music's power,
And eye matern' that beam'd so fondly then,
 She wiled away the silent midnight hour ;
But little could her girlish fancy ken,
 The lurking ills that o'er a sea-life lour,
Or, well I ween, her young and guileless breast,
Would little more of pleasure know—or rest.

XCI.

Perhaps 'tis well futurity's dark veil,
 Conceals impending evils from our view ;
And fears the timid and the brave assail,
 And ills the bravest of the brave might rue,
Are nothing known ; the heart corroding wail
 For coming harm is felt by very few ;—
The most by those whose earthly doom is seal'd—
With fatal terrors suddenly reveal'd.

XCII.

But fancy's roving, wane like other things ;
Deep sleep came o'er fair ZARA's guileless eye ;
As reckless time with ever restless wings,
Will always onward unresisting fly ;
Thus sleep her balmy solace kindly brings,
To solace and refresh us—till we die ;
But lest my readers, too, should want repose,
I think I now my first Canto will close.

XCIII.

I'll wish them all a short but kind farewell,
And entertainment from the next canto ;
There they may read the strange things that befel,
Our heroine, and the bark and cargo ;
And there, perhaps, an early page may tell,
Whence distant firing came, from friend or foe ;
With many facts now wrapt in mystery,
Connected with our tale or history.

XCIV.

But ere I close I trust 'twill not escape,

My readers recollection that the ship,
Was beating to the southward, off the Cape ;

Another fact my graphic pen let slip ;
Her guns were shotted well with round and grape ;

In short she bore a full warlike equip ;
And now I think I've nothing more to say,
So go, my first canto, and—" live your day."

END OF THE FIRST CANTO.

NOTES TO CANTO I.



NOTES TO CANTO I.

STANZA II.

(1) “ *The sky was gemmed with clouds.*”

IN the southern latitudes the clouds, especially in a calm, frequently assume an appearance of delicate beauty which excites the astonishment and admiration of those inhabitants of northern climes who observe it for the first time. The firmament seems, as it were, dotted with small and delicate clusters of moss, of a pure and beautiful white, which being stationary, as they are in a calm, appear to be there merely for ornament until they are dispersed by a rising breeze or propelled onward and converted into scud.

(2) “ *And one long song about—a farmer’s daughter.*”

This song was a great favourite with the crew of the ship in which the author came to England. With the chorus, the “*farmer’s daughter*,” the sailors were all highly delighted, and made it resound through the ship night after

night in the trades, after sun-set, when scarcely any duty was required of them, and when, consequently, they were allowed to follow such pursuits as best suited their inclination ; and these were almost wholly confined to singing, dancing, and story-telling.

STANZA VI.

(3) "*Whose dream was love, whose waking sense was care.*"

It is painful to witness the demoralizing tendency of confinement on board ship of English women, the wives of soldiers, and still more the baneful influence of a tropical climate on their constitutions and morals when they arrive in India. That innate modesty for which our countrywomen are proverbially celebrated, wears off by degrees, and they too frequently fall a prey to dissipation and vicious courses.

STANZA VII.

(4) "*His eye was every where.*"

A figure of speech very common on board ship. So vigilant is the eye of a good seaman, that a foot of rope can scarcely be out of its place and escape his detection.

STANZA XI.

(5) “ *His youthful years in Toprabana’s isle.*”

Ceylon, the supposed Taprobana of Ptolemy. As far as scenic beauty is concerned, it is one of the most splendid islands on the habitable globe. Vegetation may be almost seen starting into life at every step; and footpaths, which to-day are cleared away to form a passage for some particular purpose, may to-morrow be entangled by creeping-plants, and be almost impassable. The females of Ceylon are gifted with forms unsurpassed for beauty in any country, although in point of feature they are less remarkable, unless in some instances for ugliness. The climate of this fine island is almost as fatal to European constitutions as that of Java.—See Bishop Heber’s Journal.

STANZA XXIII.

(6) “ *For oriental ladies seldom fail
To weep aloud the woe their bosoms rend.*”

To an European the chamber of woe, in the domicile of an oriental family, affords no small astonishment. On the first announcement of death, the relatives beat their foreheads, tear their hair, and wail and shriek,—

“ So long and loud as if they ne’er would end.”

Custom is an infallible preceptor in things of this sort. It is, however, but fair to admit that the ladies of India possess great sensibility ; and that, therefore, the wailings with which they rend the air are not all acted in conformity with custom.

STANZA XXIV.

(7) “ *Cold England’s humid clime ill suited her,
Or ZARA either, her lovely daughter.*”

Very few oriental ladies enjoy either health or happiness in Europe. It is in general a cruelty to transplant these delicate flowers to so ungenial a climate as that of its more northern parts.

STANZA XXXIII.

(8) “ *The deadly calm still reigned, no cloud was seen,
The sea a tint now wore of palish green.*”

The colour of the sea is subject to as many transitions as that of the camelon ; and it is influenced by various causes—such as the distance from land—the depth of water—the state of the atmosphere, clear or humid—the brightness or dimness of the sun’s rays—and, above all, the clearness of the heavens. In general, however, the colour of the sea, say a thousand miles from land, with a full sunshine and a clear blue sky, is beautifully blue : by moonlight, it is usually a light green.

STANZA XXXIX.

(9) "*The hollow-sounding bell had stricken eight.*"

The ship's bell strikes every half-hour, until the *eighth* half-hour inclusive, when it recommences, and so on through the four-and-twenty hours, except at what is called the "dog-watch;" that is, from 4 to 6 p.m. and from 6 to 8 p.m. When the ship's crew are in two watches, the dog-watch is so regulated as to give them alternately, night after night, a change of watch; otherwise, the middle-watch (for instance, from 12 to 4 a.m.) would fall invariably on the same individuals, and consequently subject them to great hardship.

(10) "*The starbolines were roused from sleep profound.*"

The watches at sea are designated "starboard" and "larboard;" and the boatswain, in piping the watch calls, "Starboard watch, a-hoy!" or,

"Starbolines, a-hoy!"

"Larbolines, a-hoy!"

STANZA XLII.

(11) "*And a young, saucy midshipman, named TATE,
(Who always was a 'wayward wight,' 'twas said.)*"

This young fellow's "time" to sleep his final sleep in the ocean had not, it seems, "then come;" but I lament

to say he subsequently met with a watery grave in Asia. He commanded a country brig there, and, having fallen overboard in a squall, was lost.

STANZA XLIV.

- (12) “ *And fell sans ceremonie into the sea,
Just abaft the larboard quarter-gallery.* ”

The extreme after-part of the ship, forming the angle of the stern.

STANZA L.

- (13) “ *The bark was ta'en aback with what they call,
In eastern seas, or China, ‘a white squall.’* ”

The white squall is very dangerous, and occurs mostly in low latitudes. It gives no warning of its approach, either by a cloud or a ripple of the water, but rushes on instantaneously, and frequently carries away the masts, and even upsets the vessel.

STANZA LIV.

- (14) “ *The vessel bore away before the squall
At the fleet rate of fourteen miles an hour.* ”

This may appear a rapid rate of sailing for a trading vessel; but it certainly occurred under the author's obser-

vation ; when, (as says the hackneyed phrase,) “ the captain hove the log, and the chief mate held the glass.”

- (15) “ *Of heavy hail, that pattered down as fast,
As for a wager they were downward cast.*”

Hail frequently falls in tropical seas, especially near the equinoctial. The showers, however, are merely transient. The author once witnessed a greater marvel, a shower of young fry ; they had doubtless been absorbed by a water-spout, or by the attraction of the solar rays.

STANZA LXX.

- (16) “ *The sceptred storm maintains terrific sway.*”

The Cape may be appropriately designated the “ monarch of the storm.” In no other part of the world does the sea, in a storm, present so terrible and sublime an aspect ; to the description of which both the power of language, and the painter’s skill, are totally inadequate.

- (17) “ *And where at night the sailors still declare
The Flying Dutchman’s seen off Table Bay.*”

The legend of the spectre-ship off the Cape, yclept the “ Flying Dutchman,” is well known to seamen ; but for the satisfaction of those who may be unacquainted with its origin, and who may be tinctured with the curiosity peculiar to the superstitious mind, I shall merely record that

it has been handed down in the following form upwards of a century. At a certain period, when the Cape was in the possession of the Dutch, it was usual to prohibit the entrance of ships into Table Bay in stormy weather. On one stormy day, a Dutch merchantman crowded with passengers and troops attempted to enter the Bay, in defiance of the prohibitory flag then hoisted to prevent him. Distress for water and provisions, together with the sinking state of the vessel, urged the captain to persist in his attempt until the batteries drove him to sea, when the ship and all the crew perished in sight of the spectators on shore; since which time, the ship is said to haunt those seas, and especially at the midnight hour, to—

“ Desport in storms his flying kites,
Mann’d with blanch’d and terrifying sprights.”

STANZA LXXI.

(18) “ *And so believed the late Sir Walter Scott.*”

The author presented to a relative of Lady Peschell an autograph of the deceased and lamented bard, confirmatory of this persuasion.

STANZA LXXIII.

(19) “ *And water-spouts were there.*”

Water-spouts are extremely dangerous. Should one of them discharge its contents over a vessel, it would in all

likelihood sink her. Men-of-war frequently salute these visitors with a shot, which bursts the spout, and the discharged water rushes down on the ocean with a tremendous roar.

STANZA LXXXV.

(20) “ *To watch the swift approach of lovely night.*”

The swiftness of the approach of night in tropical seas is proverbial.



Z A R A.



CANTO II.



I.

A SLENDID star poetic lately said,
 (I quote decidedly from memory),
“ Nothing perplexes more the poet’s head
 Than opening well a canto of poesy ;”
But Horace, whom at school I sometimes read,
 Says, “ To begin—(and with him I agree)—
Is half the work :” the matter thus cut short,
I’ll now proceed precisely as I ought.

II.

In tropic seas 'tis sweet at break of day,
Ere lovely east displays her crimson hue,(1)
To view the rising of the solar ray,
In irridiscent tints of gold and blue;
'Tis sweet to contemplate the scene and lay
Recluse to lee, apart from all the crew;
There to recall the sanguine dreams of youth,
Wild as a vision just as void of truth.

III.

At rising of the glorious orb of day,
Fresh peer'ing o'er the ambient rolling sea,
Beaming afar his bright celestial ray,
From east to west, beneath a canopy
Of clear blue, cloudless, spotless sky, I say
'Tis then the dreams of earthly bliss may be
Devoid of fallacy, for one brief hour—
In admiration of Creation's power.

IV.

And sweet it is amid such scenes as these,
To con the sequel of a lover's tale ;
Or epic poem ;—Milton, if you please ;
Myself prefer the works the *heart* assail
With themes of tenderness or grief, or tease
With doubt and deep suspense ; these seldom fail
To meet my taste precisely, if the're true,
Or based on truth (as mine) or they'll not do.

V.

To read of Milton's Eve is harrowing,
As out of Eden she was weeping cast ;—
And Juliet's woes the tender heart will sting,
As in her arms her Romeo breathed his last ;
But Effie-Dean, who fain to hope would cling,
Thro' her sad trial, and when it was past,
Is rich beyond compare, except the griefs,
We read in that sweet book, the Scottish Chiefs.

VI.

I read the tale when young and shed a tear,

A trait of weakness perhaps, but that's all one ;

If 'twas, a charm it left as sweet as e'er

The fam'd Sir Walter's pathos would have done ; (2)

But youthful feelings flee with years, 'tis clear ;

The only tale I've lately read that won

A new delight is that of Hayti's queen,

Who crown and life for love lost, at eighteen. (3.)

VII.

To tread the deck is sweet, when weather's fine,

Lull'd by the music of the wind and waves ;

The boatswain's pipe to breakfast or to dine,

Is sweet, and rest that wearied nature craves ;

'Tis also sweet to watch the sun's decline,

As leaning o'er the side the ocean laves ;

Sweet is the bell-chyme to the mid-watch crew,

Fervid the wish the hours swifter flew.

VIII.

'Tis sweet at eve to hear the wild sea-cry,
Of howling winds and blaring surge to lee ;
To watch the blue waves gliding swiftly by,
Anon all foam, and now a fire-gem'd sea ;
To view the spray to windward dashing high ;
To hearken to the sea-boy's voice of glee ;
All this is sweet to those who can descry,
The charms of nature best, when most lonely.

IX.

Three nights had fled since distant cannons' roar
Was heard on board, but naught whate'er was seen ;
The wind blew steady still, but as before
Directly foul ; and long the bark had been
Slow beating south off Afric's mildew'd shore,
With fine fair days and nights of moonlight sheen ;
'Twas then the sailors met at eve to tell,
Their marvel tales, and many told 'em well. (4)

X.

And as the shade of lonely night drew nigh,
 Shrill through the rigging did the south wind blow ;
And oft a blast would screech, as 'twere—a sigh
 Of anguish wrung from hopeless breast of woe ;
The moaning breeze increased ; dark scowl'd the sky,
 Loud dash'd the surge beneath the vessel's prow ;
Loud burst the laugh at mysteries reveal'd,
Loud creak'd the cordage as the vessel heel'd.

XI.

Aurora's dawn dispersed the shade of night,
 But scowl'd a dark and dismal purple hue,
As from the royal cross-trees giddy height,
 (That is, a place commanding the best view
Of distant objects as they heave in sight),
 A sailor's hail the mate's attention drew ;
He said, in short, a *strange sail* was in sight—
Hull down before the beam,—and he was right.

XII.

T'was Stanton's watch that night and soon was he,
Recluse aloft with spy-glass in his hand ;
And as he swept the horizon to lee,
He spied the stranger veer his course, and stand
Directly for them; he watched patiently,
And every movement of the stranger scann'd,
With the keen scrutiny of seaman's eye,
That soon can 'guise of foeman-ship descry.

XIII.

He made him out a light square rigg'd carack,
About three hundred tons ; but it was clear,
Of foreign build ; his hull was painted black,
Relieved with a red mould ; and then his gear,
And trimming of his sails, appeared to lack
That perfect symmetry, as he drew near,
Which British war ships never fail to show,
And strike the eye with awe where'er they go.

XIV.

His masts were raked,(5) his hull was long and low,
His bows were sharp and chaste beyond compare ;
Just such as now they always shape the prow,
Of vessels built for speed or for warfare ;
And as he heel'd to billows to and fro,
Unceasing watched his slightest movements were
By Stanton from aloft, till he came down,
His fine eyes glist'ning 'neath a gathering frown.

XV.

He trod the deck and soon the mandate flew,
In piercing shrill behest—" all hands to quarters ;"
Loud was the din of bustle, and quite new,
At least to all the soldier's wives and daughters ;
But they were sent below from harm or view ;
For ever on the bosom of blue waters,
'Mid battle's roar the sound of woman's wail,
Is sure to make the manly bosom quail.

XVI.

And when below they seemed, a motley clan ;—
The timid maid with looks of terror wild,
The fierce virago—unsubdued by man,
The meek young wife and tender blooming child;
Two doctors too were there, and they began
To get their lint and sundry dressings piled ;(6)
And ready were *in case* of mortal strife,
To cut, probe, saw, or bandage, to save life.

XVII.

The cabins now were struck, chests stowed away, (7)
And both the gun and quarter decks were cleared ;
But soon they bore a rich warlike display ;
Large double headed shot and grape appeared
In boxes piled in cones ; the powder lay
Close to each gun, whose gaping muzzle peer'd,
Just o'er the ocean thro' the port-holes low,
And seemed to bid defiance at a foe.

XVIII.

On deck the soldiers formed a shewy line,
And felt or looked extremely daring when
Their colonel passed among them to divine
The good or bad appearance of his men ;
But all were cheerful, nor wished to decline
The brunt of battle should it offer then ;
The married cared but little for their lives,
Their sole solicitude was for their wives.

XIX.

Meantime the stranger near'd amazing fast ;
Close haul'd was he and bore a press of sail
That laid him gunwale under,(8) till each mast
Like supple twigs were seen to bend and quail,
As if they fear'd each lurch would be the last ;
His *tout ensemble* indeed could not fail,
To strike conviction to a seaman's mind,
He could be of no ordinary kind.

XX.

The model of his hull was light and lovely,
Unequalled perhaps in beauty or in taste ;
And as he rose and heel'd to every sea,
His sides and taper'd bows shone richly cased
With copper, sheen as polished gold could be ;
But looked not quite in keeping with the chaste,
Yet *outré* bearing of his low sleek hull,
All clothed in gloom and to appearance, dull.

XXI.

Again,—his standing rigging and his gear,
Were bagatelle to British seaman's eye ;
In these he showed but poorly ; and 'twas clear,
His shrouds were old and fitted lubberly ;
As 'twere his whim or pleasure to appear
En négligence, intending to lay by
His best apparel for a future day ;
To sport perhaps in homeward port or bay.

XXII.

His main and topsail ties and sheets were—chains ;
 Their jackstays—of the same material ;
His hammock rails were high, and clearly pains
 Were ta'en with tarpawlings to cover all
The hammocks ; probably because the rains
 Were soon expected heavily to fall ;
What e'er the reason was I can't but say,
 'Tis nothing more than ships do every day.

XXIII.

But STANTON entertained a different thought ;
 He said, “ his taunt and rakish masts and ties,
“ Of chains, were not exactly there for naught ;—
 “ His lubberly rig too, was mere *disguise*,
“ To lull suspicion in the bark he sought,
 “ The better her to carry by surprise ;”
And—“ that his hammock-cloaths and hammocks too,
 “ Would shelter give from shower of grape or two.”

XXIV.

But what appeared extremely strange, not one
Of all the glasses fixed on him could trace,
The symptom of a solitary gun
On board, nor trace of human form or face,
Save two young helmsmen and a man at cum, (9)
And one lad coiling up the lee main brace;
As messenger of some impending doom,
He shrouded seemed in saddening sullen gloom.

XXV.

He near'd, tho' yet he was not near enough,
His *minutiae* exactly to desery;
Close to the wind he sailed, keeping his luff
Near as a sea-bird to the bleak wind's eye;
"I see,"—the captain said, in voice as rough
As Boreas, "I see the reason why
The renegado keeps his luff, we'll try
If yon black hull is shot proof, by and bye."

XXVI.

He was a man of poor ability,
Of little mind, but most unwieldly body ;
As dead to feeling or civility
As a sea gull—a booby—or a noddy ;
As sensitive of *self* as they may be ;
For no one else cared he a lawyer's fee,
Except his pale, wan, purser—Mr. CRASS,
Precise and wily, greater knave, than ass.

XXVII.

He, was nor friend or favorite of the crew ;
Some called him “ slops,”(10) and others “ Nicholas sly ;”
STANTON the idol was ; full well he knew,
The way to curb the mind that dar'd defy
His cheek ;—all feared and much revered him too,
And watched the glances of his searching eye,
With the alacrity true genius finds,
Its beek attended to by willing minds.

XXVIII.

Some strange opinions thro' the ship now spread ;
A sailor forward thro' a spy glass eyed
The stranger bark ; he looked, and looked, and said,
“ Grim death he'd often grappled side by side,
“ But any one to view yon figure-head,
“ Nor feel a thrill of horror, he defied,”
Then Stanton gazed, and said, all he could see,
Was a—DEATH'S HEAD—as black as night could be.

XXIX.

The glasses o'er the figure-head were brought
To bear, and eyes, in every direction ;
It was, indeed, most admirably wrought,
And true to horror, as the perfection
Of human art could reach ; and yet 'twas thought,
A marvellously *outré* selection ;—
'Mong all the figure-heads 'tween sky and sea,
A black—DEATH'S HEAD—was quite a novelty.

XXX.

And well accorded with the sombre shade,—
The gloom of his low hull, and dull border,—
And death-like stillness that did yet pervade
His deck ; the sailors said at last, they were
(In whispers first and then aloud,) afraid,
He either was a spectre ship or tartar ; (11)
And soon a wilder surmise 'mong them ran,
He was their “ old friend,” the—Flying Dutchman.

XXXI.

But superstitious rumours oft appall
The credulous at sea ; the youth who saw
The black DEATH'S HEAD, was more indeed than all
The crew, a slave to superstitious awe ;
Scarce a bright meteor of the sky could fall,
But be predicted coming storm or war ;
He was a cunning augur, and the crew,
Implicitly believed his sayings true.

XXXII.

The nephew of a London merchant he,
Long venerated for his most sweet wealth ;
As well for deeds of melting charity,
That fain would blaze abroad, tho' done by stealth ;
At last, he died, (alas, for poor Wanley !)
And rather sudden, in the bloom of health ;
But ere he died, he gave his *protégé*,
A good long—lecture, on—morality.

XXXIII.

On virtue,—its reward ; on vice,—its lure,
In all its various ramifications ;
Duly received with thanks and looks demure,
But half bewildered, as most relations
Would be, when those they love lay past all cure,
And they left minus in their expectations,
Of cash, or home, of friends, or fire-side,
And left to stem the world's impetuous tide.

XXXIV.

He spoke of *prudence*, and gave, his blessing ;
Of *charity*, and gave him his, prayer book ;
And then his soul for ever took its wing,
From mortal scenes ; and Wanley was forsook
By every friend, nor knew he where to cling
For counsel or for succour ; so he took,
Of youthful scenes and shades he loved so well,
A poignant, parting look, and last farewell.

XXXV.

The youth had health and strength, and, what is more
Essential perhaps in this world's froward way,
A spirit brave and unsubdued, he bore ;
Great cause had he for grief ; and he would say,—
His recent ills he felt a little sore,
His friends' unkind desertion, more than any ;
He dashed a starting tear away and saw,
In a near harbour lay, a man-of-war.

XXXVI.

To join the ship next flashed across his mind,
 Regardless almost of his destiny ;
He keenly felt, of all he left behind,
 Not one would sigh, nor moistened eye would be ;
He entered then—and found the crew were kind ;
 Beloved, befriended, soon he grew happy ;
But even now he bears a strange antipathy,—
To kindred ties, and uncles, more especially.

XXXVII.

His rough and wayward life, and sea-girt home,
 Became by habit sweet and quite inviting ;
'Twas all one to him so he could but roam,
 Where'ere fate will'd, for trading or for fighting ;
The sea wind's howl and ocean's eddy foam,
 Were most the scenes he loved or took delight in ;
Active and brave he scarcely ever failed
To be beloved in every ship he sailed.

XXXVIII.

A true sailor,—is proud of his attire ;

His was neat, and gracefully became him ;

The crown of his small hat was not higher

Than some four inches, with a narrow rim ;

His bannian, trowsers, and his light shoes were,

Of canvas clean, (and cut in sailor's trim ;)

His knife—(a sailor always wears a knife,)

A love gift was as dear to him as life.

XXXIX.

Just such at twenty three was young Wanley :—

The south wind gently thro' the rigging sigh'd,

As on the forecastle he stood to lee,

With Stanton and some sailors by his side ;

They eyed the stranger long and earnestly,

But naught whatever new could be descried,

Till suddenly a busy murmur run,

He just had sent a weather bow-port—*gun*.

XL.

This warlike herald gave immediate rise
To hasty sayings, and conclusions new ;
The most, were apt, but many were surmise,
Or random guess that busy minds pursue
When danger frowns or symptoms of surprise,
And serve attention to divert in lieu,
Of sober reason and digested thought,
The aged revere, but youth receive as naught.

XLI.

Some said—" she was a man-of-war or pirate,
Because her gun was *worm'd* (12) extremely well,
And threw a ring as fine as any frigate ;"
Others that—" 'twas impossible to tell ;
She *might* a trader be ; but e'er 'twas late,
Her own tactics would certainly dispel
The veil mysterious she so wily wore,
And quiet give, or rouse the cannon's roar."

XLII.

The gun just fired, no one could desery

On board, which Stanton thought a little strange ;

And then 'twas said, as fell the sea-breeze sigh,

A bold mysterious pirate used to range

Those seas, who would the livelong day lay by,

Under bare-poles ; and that she'd often change

Her rig and track, to foil the bark who sought her,

The " SYREN " named, and that she gave no quarter.

XLIII.

Meantime the stranger luff'd, and gained at last

The weather gage ; he right a head was now,

Keeping his vantage gained and sailing fast,

Until he bore just on the weather bow ;

Then all the canvas of his mizen mast

Was lowered ; and he wore, until his prow

Precisely seemed to bear upon our bark,

As would a hawk upon a nursing lark.

XLIV.

Exceeding lovely did his foresails' show,
Full blown and charming as a maiden's breast,
As rolling gently o'er the blue billow,
That lav'd his bends with foamy curling crest ;
A lad aloft was seen to sped, but slow,
And leisurely the royals furl'd ; the rest
Of his small sails were taken in, and he
Was under topsails nearing rapidly.

XLV.

Connected with this movement there arose
A new and interesting feature in
The stranger, practised frequently by foes
As well by friends at sea ; the one to win
A confidence, the other to disclose
His flag, or inclination to begin,
A parley : in short, his ensign he now wore,
The fam'd TRI-COLOUR—Britain's foe no more.

XLVI.

The same tri-colour that for years has braved
The flag of British foemen, rashly brave ;
The same, that more than once had proudly waved
Defiance, sinking 'neath the mountain wave ;(13)
The emblem then of freedom, tho' enslaved ;
And still of liberty redeemed, now gave
To British men-of-war a pensive kind
Of reminiscence, “ ungermain ” to the mind.

XLVII.

They scowl'd at it, as men who recognize
The traits of friendship in a foeman's face ;
Evincing doubt co-mingled with surprize,
And some distrust the flag could not efface ;
And scorn, was deep depicted in the eyes,
As if they glanced a meaning, they could trace
A foeman's visage breaking to the view,
'Neath the tri-colors, red and white and blue.

XLVIII.

The stranger's distance was not very far,
And Stanton now harangued his mustered crew,
In speech exceeding brilliant, for a tar ;
A custom useful perhaps, tho' not quite new,
As much the same was done at Trafalgar,
When NELSON's signal at his mast-head flew ;(14)
And NELSON's object was, as Stanton's then,
To stimulate (15) in short, his gallant men.

XLIX.

The crew were mustered on the quarter-deck,
The idlers,(16) and the middies on the poop,
Outcasts of fortune many, and the wreck
Of wealth decayed were there among the group ;
Who by the blast of keen reverses check,
Had fortune lost and fame at one fell swoop ;
And heard unmoved young Stanton's bright oration,
Tho' creditable to himself and station.

L.

“ My men !” said he, and then his sword he drew,—
A small well tempered steel and cherished dear,
For treasured recollections, ever new,
Of boyish days ; the blade he then found near
Old Pomîret castle, rust with time and dew,
And seeming there had lain for many a year ;
His uncle had it polished the next day,
But stop’d the “ awful expence” from, *his pay*.

LI.

“ My men !” said Stanton to his mustered crew,
Yon stranger is a rover, I can tell ;
And sure am I that every one of you
Will fight like Britons, and disdain to sell
Your precious lives and cargo to a few
Inhuman thieves, who scoff at mercy’s yell,—
Who hush with murder helpless victims’ moans,
And hear sweet music in their dying groans.

LII.

“ No—fight ! my men,—fight—to the very death !

Remember home, and all you cherish there ;

That land of freedom where you first drew breath,

And how her sons have dared and still do dare,

United despots’ darings to bereath

And rob them of the glorious wreath they wear,

Of ‘ LIBERTY ! ’—disgrace not then the name,

Of Englishmen, nor aliens turn to fame.

LIII.

“ If he’s a—pirate, surely he’ll board ye,

Or try to board, that ye may believe me ;

And should he carry ye, your fate will be

To take your final slumber in the sea ;

Bound hand and foot if you drown singly,

Or back to back if lash’d to two or three ;

In either case I speak, of course, of—men ;

But as for women, heaven help them then !

LIV.

“Then fight ! my brave lads for your sake and theirs ;—
And should he try to lay you by the board,
Try *him* to carry, when he’s unawares,
And lay about, like men, with pike and sword ;
When bullets whiz, and flashing powder glares,
Let,—‘ victory !’—and ‘ forward !’ be the word ;
’Twould prove to me, indeed, a glorious day,
To tow you—DEATH’S-HEAD—in a British bay.

LV.

“ Now, every tar and soldier to his station ;
But, bear in mind, my strict command in case,
A man or boy, no matter what his nation,
Dare danger shun or shew a coward face,
The slave be instant shot ; now let a ration
Of grog be served to splice the brave main brace ; (17)
Then every captain of his gun stand by,
With steady aim his bull-dog to—let fly.

LVI.

“ But sure take steady aim, and fire *low*,
The shot will rise incalculably fast ;
Pay briskly at his hull, or just below,
His rudder chains, when’ere his stern is cast
Towards you ; mark his rise to the billow,
His fall ; and rake, when’ere you can, a mast ;
Once cripple them, and then he cannot run,
His rudder shattered, half the victory’s won.

LVII.

“ But should the stranger e’er the fight is done,
Stand fair to prove the strongest of the two,
He ne’er on this ship’s deck shall fire a gun,
Or capture, man or boy, a soul of you ;
For when they think our ship securely won,
I’ll strike a blow the best of them shall rue ;
The magazine I’ll fire, boys !—just like—
The lauded young Dutch Hero did—*Van Spyck*.

LVIII.

“ And this at least must be a consolation,
To wives, and doubtless every husband too ;
Who scarce would feel the slightest inclination
To drown by three together, or by two ;
And leave their young wives in a situation
Too dark for utterance, and yet not new ; (18)
Then hoist the ensign, nail it to the mast,
Fight to the very death !—fight to the last !”

LIX.

And here a general buz of exultation,
Closed on his speech ; the officers and men,—
Sailors and soldiers, all took their station,
And smiled as gay as wily statesmen when,
Themselves enrich, to benefit a nation,
And read the deed approved by hired pen ;
All seemed indeed exceedingly delighted,
Save those whose hopes I said before, were blighted.

LX.

To them to live or die was all the same ;
They thought the world a sad place with no friend,
Or kindred heart in agony to claim
A sympathizing sigh, with theirs to blend ;
Or throb, to welcome fortune if it came,
Or eye to weep, (when'ere it came,) their end ;
Or hand to tend them, in their parting breath,
And so they careless were of life or death.

LXI.

They felt in short a sense of loneliness,
Coeval with the reckless wounded mind,
Stung by neglect, heart riven, comfortless,
And callous grown to ill of every kind ;
On them, young Stanton's speech did not impress
That all exciting spell it left behind
On others ; still they seemed to be possessed,
Of just as daring courage as the rest.

LXII.

And now the little sea-girt warlike world,
Was cap-a-pee a floating citadel ;
Her courses both were clewed up, small sails furl'd,
And under topsails sailing she looked well
And lovely, heeling to the foam that curl'd
Beneath her lee-bow blaring like a knell,
Presaging woe to many a young breast,
That never yet had met a foeman's crest.

LXIII.

The stranger now was just about as near
As cannon shot would range ; his movements bore
A wily stillness, studied it was clear ;
His deck deserted was, just as before ;
His FIGURE-HEAD quite hideous did appear,
As ghastly grinning o'er the bow-surge roar,
And wore a gloom mysterious as it were
The grisly king of terror's self, were there.

LXIV.

The skull and hollow sockets of the eyes,
Were laurell'd with a grisly mimic crown;
And, in the deep and death-like cavities
Of nose and mouth, two shore bird-nests of down
Were seen, the nurslings warbling forth their cries
As gay as young larks ere the grass is mown;
The teeth where white as polished pebble stones;
The whole embedded were in two cross bones.

LXV.

But where was angel ZARA all this time?
Her good endearing mother and her maid
Of "all work?"—that we'll read in the next rhyme,—
—In their own cabin dreadfully afraid;
Maria penitential for some crime
Known to herself alone; fair ZARA laid,
Her mother's face on her fair bosom where,
Her sweet caresses seemed a seraph's care.

LXVI.

Thus were they occupied, two souls in one,
So deeply interwove and full of love,
Their pleasures in one kindred streamlet run,
Fore-tasting sweets the blest are said above,
In realms of bliss to taste, when Heaven's won ;
Except a dash of fear, as amorous dove
At sound of footstep nearing the yard gate,
Or flash of stranger's gun when night is late.

LXVII.

She pressed her mother's forehead with her fair
And soothing silky hand, and mingled sighs
With hers, and twined the ringlets of her hair
Within her own, while from her soft blue eyes,
Beam'd tenderness and beauty mingled where,
The melting soul in flashes seemed to rise ;
O for the eloquence of such fine eye,
To cheer the heart and sooth the sorrow sigh !

LXVIII.

The sun was just at the meridian ;
In other words 'twas noon, or twelve o'clock,
As ZARA turned her eager eye upon
The cabin door; she heard, she thought,—a knock,
Gentle at first—then two—three—and so on,
Her maid she beckoned the door to unlock ;
The captain and young Stanton then were seen,
Who took their seats on chairs of damask green.

LXIX.

Beauty is awful when with virtue crown'd ;
It sheds o'er man a deferential ray,
Well understood by those who've felt the wound
Of all despotic love in the hey-day
Of joyous youth ; and soon the captain found,
He wanted words correctly to pourtray,
The precise mission he came to reveal,
Tho' love *he* never felt, nor cared to feel.

LXX.

He hem'd !—and ha'd !—with deference, and stuttered,
Let fall his hat and picked it up again ;
And, bowing, something like—“ fair ladies,” muttered,
While Stanton's color rose and fell with pain,
For not a word a long long while was uttered,
'Till he in the extremity was fain,
To tell the ladies—“ they had better go,
A little while for safety, down below.”

LXXI.

That dreary place the cockpit was and where
Some thirty women crowded lay, or near,
Who, with the children sent for safety there,
Were stowed together in a cable-tier ;
Some water-butts, a sail, and casks a pair,
Of Hodgson's best, (extremely rare and dear,
In India *once*, tho' now the price is low,)
Form'd the *materia* of the deck below.

LXXII.

Two chairs, a table, and a canvas skreen,
Were brought to mark fair ZARA's berth, her own;
A candle lighted careless stuck between,
A tissure lined with some sea fishes bone,
Shed forth a glare, as Milton says was seen
In hell :—" of darkness visible ;" and shone,
Or glimmered rather, pale blue vapour rays,
As half fed gas in London's foggy days.

LXXIII.

The ladies from their cabin now were led
By Stanton to the deck, when ZARA saw,
For the first time, the hideous—FIGURE-HEAD;
A tremor in her soul arose,—like awe,
Akin to those who gaze upon the dead ;
(Save men inured to scenes of blood or war);
Still was she dignified ;—her eye a soul,
Fervent as fire,—yet under her control.

LXXIV.

A painter, sculptor, or a connoisseur
Of arts superb—the gems of Italy,—
Of all that's chaste and charming in nature,
(Of angel woman's form especially,)
Might sacrifice his purse, fatigue endure,
So fair a specimen of grace to see,
As Zara's attitude just then displayed,
In innocence and modesty arrayed.

LXXV.

A seraph's soul consigned to breathe in clay,
And wear a female form of loveliness,
Could scarcely robe in a more tasteful way,
Than Zara! Yet no child was ever less
Indebted to mere art for the display
Of all that graceful is in female dress;
Perhaps her taste was extraordinary;
She quite abhorred rich colors or embroid'ry.

LXXVI.

Her hair was parted o'er her forehead in
That pleasing artless curve of *négligence*,
Which scarcely ever yet has failed to win
A sweet delight from men at the first glance ;
The fashion recently I learnt had been
Imported from the dressy shores of France ;
However that may be, I must confess,
They're common now and liked of course the less.

LXXVII.

A veil of lace and white as mountain snow,
Appended to her hair fell graceful o'er
Her shoulders, fastened 'neath a simple bow
Of satin, also white; the gown she wore,
Was a light lilac British merino,
Of texture fine as muslin, and much more
Desirable and durable at sea ;
Her hose were silk, her shoes white taffety.

LXXVIII.

Her bosom, as a blushing rose-bud lie

Beside her mother's breast; her lips were grac'd

With smiles, well nigh suppress'd by saddening sigh,

As o'er the stranger bark she glanc'd in haste;

But then to mark the flashes of her eye!

Its brow—her bust—and then, (O, Heaven!)—her waist;

How lost, alas! is Man to self-control,

When LOVE once gains possession of his soul.

LXXIX.

All self-control is then completely lost;

Love reigns triumphant o'er a heart, his throne,

Supported at a most tremendous cost

Of burning sighs and tears, and many a groan,

And many a night in sleepless torments lost,

And many a day in reveries wrapt alone;

'Tis Cupid's revel, then,—Love's tears his wine;

He, laughing, cries—*the world—the world—is mine!*

LXXX.

And smiles to see his wretched victim's tear,
And laughs to see him loathe the daintiest food,
And scoffs to see him, like a stricken deer,
For solace fly within the shady wood,
To hear it echo with the name so dear,
That probes the wound but cures not; if it could
The Exchequer replenish'd might be quite,
By taxing lovers in them day or night.

LXXXI.

And might pay half the nation's debt, or more;
But that important monosyllable,
If, invariably will, and to our sore
And most grievous discomfiture, dispel
Our *very* grand conceptions by the score;
If, I inherited the rich mantle,
Of Homer, Milton, Racine, or Shakspeare,—
Or Rothschild's purse, I would not tarry here.

LXXXII.

The sylvan shades may echo lovers' cries,
The nightingale's and cuckoo's plaintive song;
The burning sigh of lovers' agonies
May pierce the woodland's glen, where lovers long
To lounge, and watch the moon, the stars that rise,
And listen to the thrill of leaves along
The solitary greensward slope; but naught is prized,
Save the loved presence of the object idolized.

LXXXIII.

Once the fond idol of his torment near,
The burden of his bosom instant flies,
But leaves him mute with tender awe and fear,
While draughts of blisses from his charmer's eyes,—
He steals in extacy! indeed 'tis clear,
True love (in youth of course I mean) relies
His every hope on stolen smiles and glances,
Which constitute the soul of love's advances.

LXXXIV.

Of love fair ZARA haply little knew,
Save that of filial kind; perhaps 'twas well;
The breast, once barbed, has often cause to rue
The cruel dart that made the bosom swell
With aspirations dangerous as new,—
It's charm, deceit, as many belles may tell;
But ZARA lov'd her mother, and her arm
On her's reclined, her smile her sweetest charm.

LXXXV.

Her visage wore a meditative cast,
O'ershaded with a dash of pensive grief;
The smooth sweet surface of the life she'd passed,
In fair prospective rose to mind; the chief
And only solace she derived at last,
From all her reveries that gave relief,
Arose from the delight, she then would share
Her mother's ills, and bear what she would bear.

LXXXVI.

This thought was scarcely born, when swift it flew
Down to her heart, from thence to her fair face,
Then deep suffused with cheering smiles, that threw
O'er all herself a mild and winning grace ;
Not that such smiles by any means were *new*,
But merely strange at such a time and place ;
'Mid warlike preparations, rife just then,
To cope with desperate and lawless men.

LXXXVII.

The smile her mother saw, but little knew
The filial source from whence the pleasure sprung ;
A white crape shawl she o'er her shoulders threw,
And side by side, they close together clung,
Until a spy-glass from the stranger's crew,
Was seen to flash upon them, and among
The paraphernalia of their force:—
The ladies then were sent below, of course.

LXXXVIII.

Gloomy and drear then seem'd their safety den,
Though greeted by the women with a glad
And cheering welcome; some of whom were then
As gay as nightingales, and others sad;
They scarce were seated in their drear berth when,
A "rumour" grew, the stranger vessel had
"Just haul'd his wind (19), his topsail laid aback,
And then was hove-to on his larboard tack."

LXXXIX.

A hundred tongues loud rumour wears, 'tis said;
And is (and wisely perhaps) the learn'd decide,
Of *feminine* class; but *I* am much afraid
The lady steers sometimes a little wide
Of truth; and those indebted to her aid,
Have cause to wish the lady *never lied*;
However this may be, she now was right
As to the stranger's recent movements,—quite.

XC.

He suddenly had haul'd his wind, 'tis true,
And quiet lay not very far to windward,
Under his topsails snug enough *hove-to*;—
(That is, an evolution to retard
The progress, much the same as steamers do
When they revolve the paddle-wheels backward;)
And this said movement brought the vessels soon,
Exactly side by side, the time, *just noon*.

XCI.

But now 'tis time, my courteous reader, we
Must e'en shake hands for a minute or two,
By way of parting:—a ceremony,
'Tis quite imperative we submit to,
In deference to the rules of poesy;
These long Cantos will never, never, do;
Poetic rules we must not disregard,
Reviewers lash sometimes so *very* hard.

XCII.

Anticipations, are but silly things ;

Events are crowding quickly on our page,

As strange as romance on her fairy wings

E'er blazoned to a marvel loving age ;

But you read facts ; and if the sequel wrings

Your tender breast at all,—the pain assuage,

By recollecting worldly woes are a,—

Mere incubus,—a fleeting chimera.

XCIII.

All mortals are, (the cause, that awful tree

And the fine fruit) destined, sad truth ! to pass

The vale of tears and sorrows ;—none are free ;

No one of any clime, or grade, or class ;

(Nor those especially who tempt the sea ;)

Till life's strange scene is o'er ; but now, alas !

My lamp is nearly out, my fire, quite ;

And I am weary, so farewell, good night.



NOTES TO CANTO II.



NOTES TO CANTO II.

STANZA II.

(1) “ *Ere lovely East displays her crimson hue.*”

IN the seas of the tropics, the east at dawn of day first appears, in fine weather, tinged with crimson, next with gold and purple, and, lastly, with a brilliancy of gold too glaring for the eye, which glories usher in the orb of day.

STANZA VI.

(2) ————— “ *as e'er*
The famed Sir Walter's pathos would have done.”

This stanza was written before the lamentable demise of the celebrated bard.

(2) “ *A new delight is that of Hayti's queen.*”

As a very interesting book, founded on this tragi-romantic event, is in hand, the author will not, by further alluding

to the tale in the present instance, afford to the reader the opportunity of an anticipation which might destroy the effect of the work.

STANZA IX.

(4) “ ‘*Twas then the sailors met at eve to tell
Their marvel tales, and many told ‘em well.*”

Perhaps the admission of the author may be deemed extraordinary, that, when a boy at sea he was more entertained in listening, in the delightful evenings so peculiarly bland and beautiful about the equinox, to the miraculous tales of the sailors than he was by the perusal even of the still more wonderful incidents related in the Arabian Nights. True it is that their tales bordered more on the wonderful than on the sublime ; but the predilection of sailors for the extraordinary, and especially for every thing relating to the spiritual world, is well known. Never were our men at a loss for a new tale, each wonder surpassing the last. Most of them were replete with the humour peculiar to their race ; and I verily believe, had their tales been taken down by one of the talented reporters of the parliamentary debates, rendered fit for the press, and published, the work would have run through an edition in a fortnight.

A brief outline of one of these tales is subjoined for the amusement of my readers, to the correctness of which I have adhered as well as my memory enables me.

“ A company of merchants at Bristol fitted out a ship on a voyage of discovery : I was a quarter-master on board of her. We set sail on Sunday, the 21st of October, the year before last. The weather was fine ; we were in high spirits, and full of those anticipations of novel objects and stirring incidents which may fairly be expected in a voyage of discovery. The wind continued fair until we came within sight of Rio Janeiro ; when one night, a fierce north-easter took us aback and drove us for many days to the south-west. The days were darkened with fog, and mist, and rain, so that we could hardly see the ship's head ; and the nights were a thousand times worse. For weeks we could not get a sight of the sun or a star ; and, the storm still increasing in violence the captain and all of us became very uneasy. At the end of the third week the gale increased to such fury that we sprang a leak, and at midnight shipped a sea which washed our binnacle and compass overboard, which was the more distressing, it being the only serviceable one we had, our other having been broken ; so that, in fact, we were left to the mercy of the gale which propelled us onward for another fortnight, not knowing, or being able even to guess, where we were, or whither we were likely to be driven.

“ One morning at dawn of day, I was slumbering on the forecastle, the wind still blowing almost a hurricane, when, suddenly the Sun shewed himself, and right ahead *land* appeared in sight. At the same time the gale abated ; and the rays of the sun exhibited a splendour so peculiar, that

we had never witnessed the like before. The nearer we approached the shore, the more transparent and beautiful shone the heavens tinged with colours of every hue ; and so refreshing was the air that we felt ourselves as it were, in fairy land. The captain tried to take an observation, but turned pale, and said he could not bring the sun down to the horizon. He tried again, but with the same ill success. At the same moment a man seated on the lee cat-head, called out, ' Here's the most wonderful fish you ever saw coming down upon us ! ' And true enough : a shoal of mermaids, three times as large as human creatures, surrounded the ship in such numbers that we became alarmed, fearing they would get on board. They swam breast-high, and the heads of many of them nearly reached our main-chains. Some of them, seemingly the young ones, were so remarkably handsome that I almost wished I had one of them for a bedfellow ; and, had she not been of three times my size I would have asked the captain's leave to have her on board. We kept them down, however, and neared the shore rapidly ; when, bless my stars ! what a scene of beauty burst on our view ! The foliage of the trees bore the appearance of gold and silver spangles. The hills and valleys sparkled with gems and precious stones ; and the breeze sent forth a strain of melody far more ravishing to the ear than any music you ever heard or could conceive. We sailed up a large river, the waters of which presented the appearance of liquid gold ; and as we shoaled our water the colossal mermaids left us with a tremendous shriek. At

night we cast anchor close in shore, the captain intending to go on shore in the morning. The breeze continued through the night its strain of enchanting melody. In the morning we manned our boat, and I was coxswain. As we pulled for shore we were all in a state of wonder at the grandeur and beauties which surrounded us. We landed, and Oh, what a sight! The sand was gold-dust, the stones, pearls; and we were all filling our pockets as fast as we could fill them, when suddenly we were surrounded by a host of beautiful women and handsome men, whose forms were enveloped in a flimsy mantle of white, which shone so dazingly that we were obliged to cover our eyes with our hands. Strange to say, they all appeared to be young. They approached us, but not near enough to allow us to touch them, nor would they speak to us; and in a few minutes we were surrounded by additional thousands.

“Three months we remained in this heavenly land, unmolested; faring better than, I am sure, we ever fared before. The springs gave out a delightful beverage, a little stronger than our grog; the fruit-trees yielded food finer than our roast beef; and our only wants were wives and tobacco. At last we held a consultation; and the captain said he would make sail for England, and, on his arrival, he would report the land to government for the sake of the gold; and that we should then all be made lords and knights, according to our rank on board. This pleased us, well; and, after loading the ship with gold and precious stones, we set sail.

“ After a few days' sailing before the wind, the melody of the breeze suddenly left us ; and another storm arose, which carried us away for some weeks. We still knew not where we were ; when, one day, a sailor cried out, ‘ *Breakers ahead !* ’ We put the helm down, but too late ; for the vessel struck. We took to our boats, but so high was the surf that three of the four boats swamped ; and we were in the long-boat fourteen hands without provisions. We spread a shirt for a sail, and dashed on before the wind day after day, night after night, until exhausted nature could hold out no longer. One perished after the other, and I at last was left alone. Famishing and fainting, I fell asleep, and on awaking, found myself in a strange ship—an English merchant vessel bound for Liverpool, which had hove to and picked me up. On my arrival in London I reported all the wonderful adventures of my voyage to the Lords of the Admiralty ; but I was shamefully used ; for they would not believe a word I said, and actually, laughed in my face ! ”

STANZA XIV.

(5) “ *His masts were raked.* ”

The masts are said to be “ raked,” when they diverge from the perpendicular ; and when they incline toward the stern, to “ rake aft.”

STANZA XVI.

(6) “ *To get their lint and sundry dressings piled.*”

A naval officer, a friend of mine, assured me that he had seen, in the cock-pit of a frigate, the lint and dressings preparatory to an action piled as high as three or four feet.

STANZA XVII.

(7) “ *The cabins now were struck.*”

The cabins on the dun-deck of an Indiaman are constructed of canvas, framed on wood, and so fitted as to be capable of being taken down, or refitted, at a few minutes' notice.

STANZA XIX.

(8) “ *Close hauled he was, and bore a press of sail
That laid him gunwale under.*”

When a ship carries on a press of sail which causes her to heel over to leeward so deep that the water rushes into her gunnels, she is said to be “gunnel under.”

STANZA XXIV.

(9) “ *Save two young helmsmen and a man at cun.*”

The man at “cun” is one stationed in advance, or to “windward” of, and close to the helmsman : his duty is

to direct and guide the movements of the helm. In merchant ships this accessory is in general dispensed with ; but, in times of danger, the captain himself “ cuns ” the ship.

STANZA XXVII.

(10) “ *Some called him ‘ slops.’* ”

The term “ slops,” as applied to the small fry called pursers—a race now, and for ever (happily), extinct in all ships save men-of-war, owes its origin to the circumstance of their providing “ slops ” for the sailors, as apparel, tea, sugar, &c. ; for which is very modestly charged a *profit* of only *seventy-five per cent.*;—Poor Jack !

STANZA XXX.

(11) “ *He either was a speetre-ship, or Tartar.* ”

Whether he caught the tartar, or, having caught him, the tartar proved the stronger of the two, remains to be seen.

STANZA XLI.

(12) “ *His gun was wormed extremely well.* ”

By greasing the inside of the muzzle of a cannon, the tone of the report is greatly increased ; and, on its dis-

charge, a beautiful ring is formed of the powder which darts into the air and rises rapidly. In calm or fine weather it has a very beautiful effect : the gun is then said to have been “ *wormed*.”

STANZA XLVI.

- (13) “ *That more than once had proudly waved
Defiance, sinking 'neath the mountain wave.*”

Allusion is here made to the by no means rare instances, in the late war, of the foe vanquished by British prowess, sinking beneath the mountain-wave, with colours proudly flying, in defiance of the victor.—See “ James’s Naval History.”

STANZA XLVIII.

- (14) “ *When Nelson’s signal at his mast-head flew.*”

“ England expects every man to do his duty.”—The French, it is well known, are passionately fond of *effect* ; and the author verily believes that the brilliant victory gained by the immortal hero of Trafalgar left not any thing like so great an impression on the minds of the Frenchmen as did the signal thrown out previous to the commencement of the struggle. The author grounds his opinion on one of many pleasing conversations held in his youth with a French

gentlemen, a beloved friend of his, of which the battle and the victory were the topics ;—

“ Ay, but the *signal*—how glorious !” said my friend.

“ Nay—but the *battle* !” said I.

“ Very grand and glorious,” rejoined he. “ But the *signal* !—that *signal* !”

The signal alone engrossed the admiration of my friend, and in his view eclipsed the mighty victory itself ; to which, in point of fact, it was but a stimulant. Still it would be unfair to generalize too much. The greatest admirers of effect of that gallant nation must surely have seen enough in the course of the contest and its result, to satisfy the imagination and all the senses to satiety.

(15) “ *To stimulate, in short, his gallant men.*”

Very good policy no doubt. Now, extremely various have been the plans resorted to, to gain this object. The author once heard it said that the gallant Picton used to stimulate his soldiers previous to battle, by addressing them in these encouraging terms :—“ Go it rascals ! go it ragamuffins !” For the truth of this the author cannot vouch ; but of that of the following anecdote, he is well satisfied.

There was a dashing captain of a frigate in service in India, (if the author mistakes not, it was Captain Dawson of the *Iphigenia*,) who was a sailor of the good old school. Fond of single-stick, and manly sports of every description. Gladly would he reward with a bottle of rum any man

on board who could prove himself a match for him at single-stick and give him a broken head ; but his rum was pretty safe in the locker. He was the sailors' delight. They loved him for his familiarity, respected him for his courage, and feared him for his unflinching and strict enforcement of discipline. He had, however one weak point, he was a great *beau* ; even in his dishabille, silk stockings and pumps were common with him ; and the tars when they were concealed from his view would sometimes in merry mood cry out—" I say Jack, *smoke the beau.*" He bore all with patience though secretly mortified. At last, he fell in with a French frigate his superior in weight of metal and number of men : the contest was short, but desperate ; and in the heat of it when the two ships fouled, he called his boarders, and bawling out with energy—" *Now's the time to smoke the beau, my boys! now's the time to smoke the beau!*" he led them on, and carried the enemy, himself the first to tread her deck.

STANZA XLIX.

(16) " *The idlers and middies on the poop.*"

Correctly speaking, the term " idlers" is applicable to the captain's steward, attendants, officer's servants, cooks, mechanics, &c ;—to all, indeed, who are exempt from keeping the ship's watch.

STANZA LV.

(17) "*To splice the brave main brace.*"

To splice the *main brace* is to invigorate the exhausted powers of nature with a glass of good stiff grog.

STANZA LVIII.

(18) "*Too dark for utterance, and yet not new.*"

The dreadful fate of the ladies and crew of the hapless "Morning Star," may be fresh in the recollection of many of my readers. This probability, together with a desire to spare the feelings of the surviving sufferers, withholds a description of the tragedy in detail. It is satisfactory to know that the principal actors in the bloody drama were executed. But the facts of this atrocious case, appalling as they are, bear no comparison to those related in the following brief abstract of a confession made by a pirate in America, which confession was the means of bringing the barbarians to justice.

"We bound ourselves by oath to spare no lives. We fell in with a French merchantman from the Brazils bound to Bourdeaux. We took her, and murdered all the crew, except a French gentleman, passenger, and his daughter, a beautiful girl of fourteen. She implored so eloquently for her father's life that the captain tried to save him, but one of

the crew came up and shot him dead before his daughter's face. We then sunk the ship. The captain kept the unhappy child for the gratification of his unhallowed passion until they came in sight of land, when the crew insisted that she should be *shot*; which was done against the captain's wishes and even against his entreaties."

STANZA LXXXVIII.

(19) "*A rumour grew, the stranger vessel had
Just haul'd his wind.*"

When a vessel sailing before the wind, changes her course to sail close to the wind, she is then said to "haul her wind."



Z A R A.



CANTO III.



I.

AT the conclusion of the last canto,
We left the two ships sailing side by side ;
The stranger seeming somewhat like a foe,
Who wished beneath a merchant's guise to hide,
His force in arms and men, just merely to
Let fly his great guns ere they were descried ;
A rather ugly customer I own,
To meet at sea by " moonlight," and " alone." (1)

II.

To merchant ships I mean, not men-of-war ;

To them such customer would be a treat,

Sweet as a Spanish prize from Peru, or

As fly to spider would be passing sweet,

To clinch within his handy sailor's claw (2)

And strangle in his web ;—'tis fair to beat

In poesy for similies as these ;

If very good (as this) they're sure to please.

III.

As frequently the case, a gentle haze

A misty curtain o'er the ocean threw ;

The sun effulgent beamed his golden rays,

And lulled the breeze that rather freshly blew ;

The sky had clouded been for many days,

Save here and there a streak of heavenly blue ;

Its tinge reflected on the sea as seen,

Was light blue here, and there, a darkish green.

IV.

The stranger filled his topsail and dashed on,
Close to windward, and quiet as could be ;
Nor voice nor whisper even broke upon
The sighing breeze, except the murm'ring sea
Low dashing 'gainst the vessel's side :—Stanton
Eyed well his deck, his every *minutiæ*
Of rig, and mouldings, fittings up, and then
He sought for guns and arms, and more, for men.

V.

His telescope was one of Donold's, and
They are, I think, of telescopes the best ;
The “ name ” at least, as magic's mighty wand,
Has wrought a wondrous sale, and solves the test
(So few in this wise age misunderstand)
Of “ what's in a name ? ”—as all are in quest
Of super-excellence, in their own line,
A name to gain, then riches, love, and wine.

VI.

All vastly pleasant in a prudent way,
But scarcely ever gained (O the perverse
And tantalizing world !) till the heyday
Of halcyon youth, and pleasure smiles disperse
Before the blight of age, and minds decay ;
The greatest treasure then no doubt's—a nurse,
Except the retrospect (and better none)
Of life well spent, and of good actions done.

VII.

Despite of Stanton's matchless telescope,
Of warlike arms or stores he could see none ;
Although the sailors did indulge a hope
The stranger would ere set of that day's sun,
His subtle guise unveil, and develope
At least a few more hands, or shew of gun :
As 'twas, a lad and seamen only three,
Were gazing now at him, then o'er the lee.

VIII.

Now just abaft the mizen chains, and by
The comings of an after-cabin port,
Through opening left by a shattered bull's-eye,⁽³⁾
A spyglass glar'd, or something of the sort ;
This “ looked not well ;” and Stanton wondered why
The gazer should, whoe'er he was, resort
To arts as those, his person to conceal ;
And doubts had he, he chose not to reveal.

IX.

His glass he swept o'er all the stranger bark,
From trim of sail to finish of his taffrail ;
From stem to stern, from truck to water-mark,
Until he saw, half-hid beneath a sail,
A grapnell's prong ; and 'neath a hatch, though dark,
Some seamen arm'd ; 'twas then the stranger's hail,
At once dispell'd his searching scrutiny,
And ears as eyes were then on the, *qui vive*.

X.

There was a seaman leaning careless o'er,

His hammock rails abaft the lee gangway,

Of sullen phiz, and sloven dress he wore ;—

(The sailor's *dishabille* at sea, though gay

When cash is flush and squandering on shore ;)

In years not green, at least his hair was gray,

Who hail'd, in voice subdued, as friend might do,

“ *What ship's that, pray ? and where are you bound to ?* ”

XI.

A speaking-trumpet lay by Stanton's side,

(They are conductors, good ones, too, of sound,)

Which to his lips he placed, and bluff replied,

“ The Sphinx of London, to the Indies bound : ”

The stranger then the Sphinx in silence eyed,

As, say the learned, “ in depth of thought profound ; ”

But soon his tone he changed, and bluffly roar'd,

“ *Back your main topsail, send your boat on board.* ”

XII.

The eye of Stanton flash'd like fire then;

Though small in stature, he possess'd the merit

Supposed to be innate in little men,

The world deem *great*, (4) that is, he did inherit,

'Mong other virtues (faults I never pen,)

A noble mind, and most unyielding spirit ;

He trod the deck with kingly tread, and frown'd,

“ Sea monarch” like, though not exactly crown'd. (5)

XIII.

He wore a smile of caustic irony,

Of anger fierce, and most complete disdain,

And thought no more of deigning a reply,

Than plunging headlong in the briny main ;

Or traversing the moon with you or I :

“ Stand by your guns!—stand-by ! ” he cried : again

The stranger hail'd, imperious as before,

In loud, and drawling, bull-like, blaring roar.

XIV.

Surprise, all said, was brooding in some way;
By all 'twas thought deep treachery lurk'd behind;
But where, or how, no one presumed to say;
The lack of men and guns of every kind,
Looked too much like the trick of mere display,
And viewed by all was as a common blind,
To shelter some dark scheme matured, yet unreveal'd:—
But now a STRANGER rose to view, as yet conceal'd.

XV.

A man of slender form appeared on deck,
But graceful, tall, and full of dignity;
His very presence threw a sudden check
On others of the crew, and they were three;
Each strict attending to his look or beck,
With eager eyes, though somewhat tim'rously,
And shrunk beneath his fierce glance like a leaf,
From Boreas' blast, or slave before a chief.

XVI.

His years were green ; they were presumed to be
Fast verging on that age which Avon's bard
(In morals skilled as well as minstrelsy)
The " fourth " age terms,—when passion needs a guard
To still the warm blood of fierce twenty-three ;
Yet seemingly some inward grief had marr'd
The gladness of his youth, and his faint smile,
Mere mock'ry seemed of ease, and tort'ring guile.

XVII.

He wore a beaver cap with golden band ;
A cloak of Indian woollen, light and blue,
And never hero shewed a whiter hand ;
From 'neath his vest a telescope he drew,
And coolly near the capstan took his stand ;
The Sphinx and all her force passed in review
Before his momentary glance, and then,
He paused awhile, and beckon'd to his men.

XVIII.

There was a reckless daring in his mien,
And in his tread as passing to and fro,
A dash of tender feeling, real or feign,
Soft beaming in his eyes, that seemed to throw
A shade as sweet as sunshine after rain,
O'er visage sad as e'er was dash'd with woe;
And when his men attended his command,
His cue he gave in manner soft and bland.

XIX.

They came and went, and came and went again;
And in his ear reveal'd in accents low,
Some bodings new that caused surprise and pain,
And deep suffused his face with ire's glow;
His crimson'd cheek within his hand was lain;
His sailors silent travers'd to and fro
The broad white deck, then slowly thrumm'd a sail,
With looks that all but said—"There hangs a tale."

XX.

Thus leaning o'er the capstan he appear'd,
Absorb'd in gloom, and painful meditation ;
But soon a smile his pallid visage cheer'd,
As if solaced by inward consolation ;
As riven heart, by keen reverses seared,
Is heal'd by chimeras of Hope's creation ;
He wav'd his men below and then again,
Resumed his gallant and commanding mien.

XXI.

Alone he stood on deck, and seem'd to wear
A heart and mind to lawless passions wed ;
Just so at least he *seem'd* as he stood there,
With visage haggard, and a bold forehead,
In outline beautiful, and snowy fair,
Impressively and finely contrasted,
With fine dark eyes and lashes long that met,
The rising thought, with bushy brows of jet.

XXII.

As lion couchant 'neath the wild palm tree
Whose shady leaves divert the solar ray,
With patience watches tho' a hungred he
From dawn of morn to close of sultry day
The jungle path, till rousing suddenly
His eye-balls glare as footsteps near his way,
So flash'd the stranger's eye with sparkling fire,
The soul-diverging flame of, deadly ire.

XXIII.

On the lee gangway stern he took his stand,
And with a proud but not disdainful air,
He cast aside his cloak; his snowy hand
Smooth'd the long tresses of his jet-black hair,
That gently floated in the south, yet bland
And steady breeze; just then his form would bear
Comparison with delicate Adonis—
The ladies favourite he, we all know is.

XXIV.

Reader! did terror ere thy bosom thrill?

Wert ever self-debased with pale-faced awe?—

Did ere thy warm blood freeze, or sudden chill,

At shout of foeman rushing on to war?

Did ever human voice, unearthly shrill,

Or lordly stern, unman thee with terror?

P'rhaps not; but hadst thou heard the stranger's hail,

And lion thou, it would have made thee quail. (6)

XXV.

O! 'twas a dire, dismal, piercing yell,

A wild unearthly sound, as sometimes made

By screaming thunder's echo thro' a dell,

O'ertopp'd by rocks in solitude's deep shade,

Piercing the lone heart with unearthly knell:—

“*Strike your flag! to the BLACK DEATH—strike!*” he said;

“*And quickly lay your topsail to the mast,*

Or by yon sun, this day shall be your last!”

XXVI.

Just then his proud TRI-COLOUR hid its head ;
'Twas struck, in short, by one whose face was new,
And wore a smile, methought, as in its stead,
The flag he hoisted gaily fluttering flew,
In the south breeze :—'twas *black*, with border *red* ;
(A flag ne'er seen before by Sphynx's crew,)
And scarce a second had it hoisted been,
When other traits of foeman's guise were seen.

XXVII.

His low black hull and narrow moulding red,
Display'd no trait of ports for gunnery,
Until a sailor from his figure-head,
Had quickly cast a halser in the sea ;
When, magic like, a *false side* followed,
Of painted canvas, a mere trickery—
To screen his ports ;—its fitting so complete,
'Twould baffle human eye to trace deceit. (7)

XXVIII.

Deceit, or guile, or what you will, but all
The sons (and daughters too) of Adam since,
The distant epoch of the first sad fall,
Have known thee ;—all ! from peasant to the prince,
To belles of ton, at masquerade, or ball ;
Where sighing sadness dressed in smiles evince,
Thy all-dissembling and despotic sway ;
Say, will the world e'er cast thy mask away ?

XXIX.

In LOVE, deceit's (too often) prevalent ;
In war, it forms the source and soul of it ;
In church, or state, or in the lone convent,
'Tis known as easy as a glove to fit ;
In medicine, it brings emolument ;
The lawyers cannot live without, to wit,
Its wily, grave, dissembling, sapient face ;
Though all conceal it with becoming grace.

XXX.

The BLACK DEATH now disclaimed all treachery ;
The mask was cast completely from his brow,
When fell his false side in the briny sea,
Revealing suddenly a pretty row
Of warlike ports, trimmed to a nicety ;
And through them peering blank from stern to bow,
A tier of long twelve pounders, all run out,
In number ten, I think, or thereabout.

XXXI.

A swarm of young but lusty haly men,
Of colour varying from black to fair,
Rushed from below on deck, with arms ; and then
From 'neath the booms some great guns covered there,
And ready mounted (nine there were or ten),
To lee were whirled, and quickly brought to bear
Upon the Sphinx ; a decent battery,
Of long-twelve pounders, altogether, twenty.

XXXII.

And all these movements were observed to be
In seaman-like and “ ship-shape ” style(8) effected ;
The stranger’s hail, his flag struck suddenly,
The hoisting of the black one, bordered red—
The casting of his false side in the sea—
The shew of warlike ports and guns, instead
Of canvas skreen, the rising of his crew,—
All was the work of a minute or two.

XXXIII.

And now ensued the thoughts that intervene,
’Tween preparation and the blow, of death;(9)
When e’en the bravest of the brave are seen,
Bereft of daring valor’s smiling wreath,—
Of purpose firm, or manly spirit e’en ;
Then freezing silence reigns ;, and scarce a breath
Is heard to sigh upon the air or sea,
As hovering o’er the gulph, eternity.

XXXIV.

'Tis easy in that silence to desery

The gloomy bodings of the conscious mind,
That 'tis indeed a fearful thing, to die ;

And other thoughts of heart-corroding kind,
Of wife, or child, or other cherished tie,
Left to the mercies of a world unkind,
Will interpose to sap the nerves, until
The fight begins, and *blood* is seen to *spill* :—

XXXV.

Impetuous then as Etna's roaring fire,

The spirit flashes from the anger'd soul,
In vivid flame of fierce relentless ire,

As whirlwind wild and dead to self-control ;
The brow contracted scowls with vengeance dire ;

The eye-balls wildly in their sockets roll ;
And swift as mist dispelled by Afric's sun,
Reflection flies when once the fight's begun.

XXXVI.

Still as a vault, or silent as the dead

Therein immured, the Sphynx's crew were when,
The stranger's hail had ceased ; a thrill of dread,—

As if a form invisible had then
Their hearts and minds in abject fetters led,
And left them spiritless and unnerv'd men,—
Pervaded all ; until his op'ning fire,
Dissolved the spell, and roused the lion's ire.

XXXVII.

'Twas scarce a moment after STANTON's cheer,
Broke on the sombre broodings of his crew ;
Scarce had he said, " Stand by, below !" and ere
The volume of his voice as thunder flew,
O'er the still ship, than stranger-shot whizz'd near
His cheek, suffusing it with crimson hue ;—
He felt it scorch, it *posed* him for a while ;
But miss, they say, as good is as a mile.

XXXVIII.

It certes brushed close by him—so much so,
He felt its whirl, and blaring, hissing whiz,
Precisely in the manner of a blow,
Aimed by determined bruiser at your phiz,
That just had missed its mark, (and which, I trow,
A rather lucky miss considered is ;
Especially when warding, in a hurry,
The fistic eloquence of—*M. P. GULLY.*)

XXXIX.

It scarcely entered STANTON's mind to view
His late escape in any other light
Than as a casualty, by no means new
In battle's breeze, or any kind of fight ;
But moments for reflection he had few ;
Another shot two seamen killed outright :—
'Twas then he answered BLACK DEATH's courtesy,
By pouring in a broadside at his lee.

XL.

Most animating was the SPHYNX's cheer,
As lion's roar when bounding on its prey,
That followed opening fire, and 'twas clear
The metal of the crew was roused to a
Courageous daring quite, or very near,
Approaching to a phrenzy for the fray ;
But ere the flash of pan or roar was done,
The BLACK DEATH's fire blazed from every gun.

XLI.

In both the ships the flash and roar of gun,
The cheer of seamen, and the hollow moan
Of wounded and the dying, soon begun
To clash upon the ear ; and many a groan
Was drowned in shrieks and yells ; and many an one
Beheld the sun (that then in splendour shone)
For the last time, and with a parting sigh,
And languid smile, lay quiet down to—die.

XLII.

Thou smile in death, of hope the cheering ray !

 In all of those beloved we fain would trace ;

Thou mockery sad, sublimely awful, say,

 Wert thou the impress of inmate solace,

As sped thy spirit to eternal day ?

 Or Resignation's beam upon thy face,

To leave a world replete with cares as this,

In full assurance of eternal bliss ?

XLIII.

That point I leave to others to define,

 The metaphysician or the doctor ;

To sage philosophy or the divine,

 Or those, familiar with death in war,

Have seen the veil in dying men, o'ershine

 The glassy eye, nor felt a thrill of awe ;

By such fierce scorn, or hate, or calmness may,

Even in death be seen to wear its trait.

XLIV.

And so it was upon the SPHYNX's deck,
In every diversity of shade
The grisly monarch wears : there lay the wreck,
Promiscuous strewed, of those who then had paid
The last sad debt at the grim tyrant's beck ;
Their grave unwept, in ocean's bed unmade ;
Meanwhile the battle fiercely raged, and blood,
The decks and scuppers crimsoned, like a flood.

XLV.

The vessels now alongside were sailing,
Their yard-arms touching almost each other ;
And the appalling and terrific din,
In both were thus redoubled, as it were ;
But they so densely were enveloped in
The battle smoke and flame, that the stranger
Was seen but indistinctly now and then,
But always bravely cheering on his men.

XLVI.

Erect and firm he stood, as one long tried
In warlike deeds, and knew its horrors well ;
He cheered his men, and cast on those who died,
A parting glance, as howled the wound-pang yell,
And saw the dying gape for water wide,
And heard the shots whiz past him like a hell,
In stoic calmness worthy TALLEYRAND,
Or most accomplished courtier of the land (10).

XLVII.

The thunder of his guns as dæmon-knell,
Precursor was of havoc, far and wide;
Few of his shots, if any, failed to tell ;
'Twas at the instant of the first broadside,
The SPHYNX's Captain, heaved a groan and fell ;
A bullet pierced his side and heart,—he died ;
Nor waved he a farewell, nor spake he word,
But lay down calm as then he but slumber'd.

XLVIII.

Young STANTON felt a little shock'd: "Poor STAINES!"

Said he,—“the doctor's art can naught avail

Thee now! Well—well—what fate of war ordains,

Must be endured, tis folly to bewail;”

And then he gently folded his remains

Within the remnant of a spare stay-sail:

Though not beloved alive, the sailors said,

“They wished the *Purser* lay there in his stead.”

XLIX.

To fight the ship devolved on STANTON now,

And none so willing though extremely hoarse;

A crimson blush o'erspread his face and brow,

The offspring perhaps (if traced to nature's source)

Of wild delight and unsubdued sorrow;

The latter, for his Captain's fall, of course,

Delight, that he Commander was at last;

A post his heart had yearned for, some years past.

L.

His swollen bosom scarce with rapture beat

A flash or change of thought, than battle raged
In both the ships with more determined heat,

Than ever; the maw of death was not assuaged
Though slak'd with streams of blood; he reign'd complete,

A king of terrors, hideously visaged,
With scoffing laughter mocking dying moans,
And grinning horribly at human groans.

LI.

As moon bursts on the view in azure sky,

When bared by fleeting clouds of silver hue,
So, as the smoke at intervals passed by,

The stranger's hull and sails burst to the view;
Young STANTON watched him with an Argus' eye;

And thought it strange (as certainly 'twas true,)
The smoke dispersed, the instant to discern,
His object was to, rake him by the stern.

LII.

His sails were back'd, and he was nearing fast
The SPHYNX's stern ; his hideous figure head,
Exactly for the weather quarter cast,
Near ZARA's cabin, now quite deserted ;
But ere athwart the stern the DEATH'S-HEAD passed,
Young STANTON "saw his drift," he smiling said,
And instantly his own ship smartly wore,
Closing in fight as fierce just as before :—

LIII.

Save only now to windward ; soon he lent
His sable foe a "taste of the sublime ;"
His blood was up ; his main-topsail was rent ;
A shot, his bell sent tingling its last chime ;
The stranger's fore top-gallant mast then went ;
Next, his jib-boom ; and just about this time
They both received some damages severe,
Though 'twould be needless to detail them here.

LIV.

War's horrors may be well concealed from view ;
Yet were there two scenes I must needs relate,
Among abounding war-pangs not a few,
Of the heart-rending kind : and first, the fate
Of a young sailor lad ('tis strictly true); (11)
The recital may very like create,
In tender female breasts, a lively thrill
Of sympathy ; if not, why, nothing will.

LV.

He fourteen summers scarce had seen, not more ;
Of disposition pliant, manners mild,
As a young girl's ; his neck of ivory bore
A cluster of fair ringlets, floating wild,
And graceful on the breeze ; the day before
He left his home, (he was an only child)
His mother smoothed his brow, and weeping sore,
She said, "*Poor lad—you'll never see me more !*"

LVI.

The roar of cannon, the appalling cry
Of mortal agony ; the vital stream
Fresh gushing from the wounds that met his eye,
Were more than he could bear ; a terror-scream
Escaped his lips ; he lay apparently,
As one who slept, and struggled in his dream
Within a demon's grasp : the boatswain drew
His cutlass from his belt, and *ran him through* :—

LVII.

Right through the heart ; he did not groan, but sighed,
And mildly, as his spirit took its wing,
To less ('tis hoped) undemon scenes :—he died ;
The boatswain raised his cutlass, still reeking
With his warm crimson stream of life, and cried,—
(As if he'd done a meritorious thing)
“ *So let a COWARD die ! there—be,*” he roared,
“ *His grave !*”—the corpse he then threw overboard.

LVIII.

The second case was very near as bad ;
 (“ ’Tis true ’tis pity ; pity ’tis ’tis true”);
The body of a fine young Irish lad
 Was pierced by a grape-shot completely through ;
He leant against the capstan, and just had
 Sufficient consciousness to know he drew
His dying breath ; he piteous moaned, and pressed
His cruel wound, his head fell on his breast.

LIX.

He gasped for breath, his glassy eyes grew dim ;
 He still was on his legs, and could not die !
And yet you might completely see through him,
 So large appeared the shot-wound cavity ;
At last he fainter grew, nor moved a limb,
 But he did speak, although in feeble cry,
And indistinct “ *Oh, throw me overboard !*”
The boatswain came, and took him at his word.

LX.

In short he dash'd him headlong in the sea,
Then quiet lull'd by cannons' deaf'ning roar,
Almost to a calm; his mangled body
Descended fast; and the blue ocean bore,
A surface clear as a transparency;
But ere he sunk from view, his hands before
His breast he clasped, then backward droop'd his head;
Some few air bubbles rose, and he was dead.

LXI.

Whether 'twas chance, or fate, or what you will,
MARS' malice, or MISS FORTUNE's mockery,
Or whether the tradition's true that still
Maintains—"there does preside a destiny
O'er every ball that's cast, and doom'd to kill
Or wound its man" a mystery is to me; (12)
But true it is, the very next shot blew
The boatswain's hand away, and shoulder too.

LXII.

He did howl! and, O, how he did blaspheme!

The very sea-breeze sigh'd as if 'twere tainted;

His large green eyes as hell-kites seemed to beam

A fury horrible, until he fainted,

With loss of blood. But 'tis a gloomy theme

To picture human horrors, live or dead;

The task most painful is, but quite imperative;

It forms the link connecting our narrative.

LXIII.

His limbs were cast in the Herculean mould, (13)

Large brawny shoulders, hard as adamant;

His heart as hard, and desperately bold;

He knew no friend, nor either did he want;

Rough as the life in which he had grown old,

The roar of wind and waves were consonant

To his drear mind; the seamen's fealty,

He kept alive by stripes and blasphemy.

LXIV.

His visage hideous was, a maudlin fright,
Expressive (if expression were at all)
Of callous, brutal savegeness ; it might
When rous'd to rage, a Fury's self appall ;
His green eyes in his broad face twinkled bright ;
His nose was large and curved, his mouth was small ;
His thick swarth neck bedecked with bushy hair,
Was worn (as sailors do at sea) quite bare.

LXV.

The hemorrhage of his wound was soon staid ;
A ligature of canvas was applied
Tight round the stump, while he in stupor laid,
Which stopped the blood directly ; then he sighed,
One minute, and the next an effort made
To rise, but fell, then howl'd, and raved, and cried,
(All in a breath), then tore his hair until,
They took him to the doctors, 'gainst his will.

LXVI.

The veil from off the gloomy deck below,
We'll now remove, to take a hasty glance
Of past and passing scenes, where haggard woe,
Sent forth her sighs and wails, and where the lance
Of death, promiscuous quivered to and fro,
To mock the surgeon's skill, and baffle chance,
Where'er chance was, a wound might turn out well ;
Meanwhile the battle raged, and more men fell.

LXVII.

'Twas from the period STANTON's captain fell,
And shot first whiz'd among the SPHYNX's crew,
Down to the moment the wild boatswain's yell,
Broke on the breeze that still in tremors blew,
The wounded 'gan to throng the surgeons' cell,
Who both were green in years and practice too,
Unless on subjects dead, and even they,
Since Burkers fell, fell rarely in their way. (14)

LXVIII.

They lack'd not subjects then, they had them more
Than needed was, nor wished for fresh supplies ;
Indeed they came down almost by the score,
And wistful cast their faint imploring eyes,
As strewed they lay imbrued in their own gore
To take their turn to feel the agonies
Of fretting wounds renewed by surgeon's knife,
To vivify the ebbing stream of life.

LXIX.

Some lost a leg or arm, and others two ;
Some, wounds severe endured, others slight ones ;
Others beneath the knife their last breath drew ;
Some amputation bore, the roar of guns
And human groans piercing like lightning thro'
The female breasts, then rife with sensations
Of awe and terror such they never knew,
Nor e'er believed such horrors could be true.

LXX.

If earthly horrors e'er did realize
Those said to be beyond the Stygian stream ;—
Those doleful shades where Joy frightened flies
The molten bosom, never more to gleam
With Hope, to quench the worm that never dies ;
Where Time itself dissolves to “ by-gone dream,”—
It was the deck below, with dead and dying strewed,
With shrieks and yells resounding, now hush'd—now renewed.

LXXI.

Yet was there one young female form seen there,
Who like a seraph flew to succour all,
With needful and immediate aid where'er
The voice of Agony was heard to call
For—*help!*—And that lovely form was, ZARA :
Surrounding scenes might very well appall
A stouter heart ; but her's was one of those,
That never ceased to beat for others' woes.

LXXII.

When life was ebbing fast and near its end ;
When burning thirst with parch'd lips gaping wide,
Its torment howled, then ZARA would attend,
Moisten the lips, and kneeling by the side,
Her soothing voice of tenderness would blend
With cares more tender, 'till the languid tide
Of life, exhausted grown, she then would offer prayer ;
The placid smile in death rewarding well her care.

LXXIII.

This development of heroic mind,
In one so young, who ne'er before had seen
Horror unmasked, or strife of any kind,
Beyond the precincts of a village green,
Surprised her mother, who had felt resigned,
Till ZARA's image in the dreadful scene
Fan'd her fond love ; then resignation fled,
Her heart from every pore with torture bled.

LXXIV.

Where danger is, matern' solicitude
Is doubtless torture, (so at least 'tis said ;)
And her's was not assuaged by scenes she viewed,
Tho' for herself she felt not much afraid ;
But when the boatswain's mangled form imbrued,
With crimson gore, at ZARA's feet was laid,
And the drear den with imprecations rung,
Most horrible, her nerves were quite unstrung.

LXXV.

The rough old seaman seemed delirious ;
He raved as then he led the battle fray ;
The surgeon's aid refusing with a curse,
And would have torn his bandages away,
Had not they held him down :—" my wound! 'tis worse!
Ha ! board!" he cried : " Up from below! the day—
Is our's!"—Then with a scoffing, hectic roar,—
Of hideous laughter, raved on as before.

LXXVI.

All kind of consolation he defied ;
The surgeon said he would, if left alone,
Exhaust himself ; but still he raved and cried,
By turns, as intervened each hollow moan,
Till ZARA spake, as kneeling by his side,
In clear but silver voice and soothing tone,
“ Unhappy man ! such impious words forbear,
And seek for penitence, in fervent prayer.”

LXXVII.

At ZARA's voice his raving sudden ceased ;
O'er her young form his eyes were wildly cast,
In ecstasy, as if his soul were eased
Of scorpion stings, and terror's pang was passed ;
Thus gazing on her face, he gently squeezed
Her finger-ends, and, groaning, breathed his last :
He bled to death, contriving as he lay,
To bite or tear his bandages away.

LXXVIII.

This last sad scene was terrible indeed ;

It left poor ZARA motionless with awe ;

She could not rise, nor took she further heed

Of passing scenes, although the clash of war

Ran high, and *voices new* were heard to plead,

For mercy : At this time it was she saw,

A STRANGER near her panting hard for breath ;

'Twas the young captain of the bold BLACK DEATH !

LXXIX.

Yes ! that strange, daring renegade,—but stay ;

Unravelled be his faults or virtues yet ;

Whate'er they were, you'll read some future day ;

But for the present, we had better let

The interest of this Canto pass away,

For one brief hour ; we must not forget,

My fierce Pegasus needs some slight repose,

He wild and wayward is, as gale that blows.

LXXX.

On let him dash then at a reckless rate,
Until he gain a footing on the land,
Where live the marine genii, and the fate
Of mortal heroes wove by fairy hand,
Recorded is; to read them will create
In me a rapture I can scarce withstand
To share with courteous readers, high or low ;
Then let us see what says the *last* Canto.

END OF CANTO III.



NOTES TO CANTO III.



NOTES TO CANTO III.

STANZA I.

- (1) "*A rather ugly customer I own
To meet at sea, by "moonlight" and "alone."*

Alluding to the recent very popular burden of, "Meet me by moonlight *alone*."

STANZA II.

- (2) "*Sweet as a Spanish prize from Peru, or
As fly to spider would be passing sweet,
To clinch within his handy sailor's claw.*"

The opinion which the author once heard expressed by a true son of the ocean, "that sailors were originally indebted for the most valuable and intricate of their knots to the microscopic observation of the spider working at its web," may have been erroneous; yet, doubtless, that insect is sufficiently skilful to entitle it to the distinction of possessing a "handy sailor's claw."

STANZA VIII.

(3) “ *Through opening left by a shattered bull’s-eye.*”

A “ bull’s-eye ” is a glass, either flat or semi-globular, and of the thickness of two inches, fixed in the side of a cabin, or on the deck, for the purpose of admitting light when the boisterous state of the weather renders it impossible to open the ports or hatchways without danger.

STANZA XII.

(4) “ *he possessed the merit,
Supposed to be innate in little men,
The world deem great.*”

The author here alludes to the almost proverbial remark, that nature very seldom fails to endow those who are in stature more than ordinarily diminutive, with a more than usual share of mental power, and especially to compensate them with a “ proud and domineering spirit, impatient of control.”

(5) “ *Sea-monarch like, though not exactly crowned.*”

A captain of a British man-of-war may be truly said to be “ a monarch on the sea.” Indeed, the captain of an East Indiaman possesses a power almost equally absolute.

STANZA XXIV.

- (6) “ *hadst thou heard the stranger’s hail,
And lion thou, it would have made thee quail.*”

So important is a commanding voice to a naval or military man, that I once heard a very distinguished officer remark, that, in a young aspirant for naval or military fame, the courage of a Nelson or a Wellington, or the master-mind of a Napoleon, would be absolutely neutralized in the absence of that all important auxiliary—voice.

STANZA XXVII.

- (7) “ *its fitting so complete,
'Twould baffle human eye to trace deceit.*

A mode of deceit frequently resorted to in the late war by frigates, and privateers especially.

STANZA XXXII.

- (8) “ *And all these movements were observed to be
In seaman-like and ‘ship-shape’ style effected.*”

“Ship-shape” style, &c.; a phrase very common with sailors, applied to any thing done in a particularly clever and sailor-like manner.

STANZA XXXIII.

- (9) “ *And now ensued the thoughts that intervene
'Tween preparation, and the blow of death.*”

None but those who have witnessed the death-like stillness pervading the decks of a ship, between “ the preparation and the blow of death,” can form a correct idea of that awe which is impressed on the minds and depicted in the countenances of the crew ; an awe generally of the deepest kind, but modified in the individual either by education or by temperament.

STANZA XLVI.

- (10) “ *In stoic calmness worthy Talleyrand,
Or most accomplished courtier of the land.*”

This distinguished diplomatist is said to be so perfect a master of his countenance, that, whether conversing with friend or foe, king or minister, beau or belle, it is alike illegible to all.

STANZA LIV.

- (11) “ *and first, the fate
Of a young sailor lad ('tis strictly true.)*”

The narrative connected with this stanza, as well as that alluded to in Stanza LVIII., is founded on fact ; all the incidents having happened under the eye of an intimate friend of the author's, a lieutenant of the navy.

STANZA LXI.

- (12) “ *there does preside a destiny,
O'er every ball that's east, and doomed to kill
Or wound its man.*”

It is the common belief both of sailors and soldiers, that
“ every bullet has its billet.”

STANZA LXIII.

- (13) “ *His limbs were cast in the Herculean mould.*”

This character is taken from real life.

STANZA LXVII.

- (14) “ *Since Burkers fell, fell rarely in their way.*”

The allusion here is personal, and applies to two friends of mine, who were under a course of medical tuition at Edinburgh, at the time when the hellish practices of Burke, that demon in human form, came to light. They were good young fellows ; and used to say, jokingly, “ since Burke fell, nothing fell in their way.”



Z A R A.

CANTO IV.

I.

There was a time the sober sage Hindus

Were slaves to “custom ;” in the present age,
Old usages are going out of use,

And e’en with them Reform is quite the rage ; (1)
And poets soon will cease to court the Muse ;

Or crave her inspiration of their page ;
But mine’s a “ liberal ;” and, (if at all)

Will aid me willingly—without my call.

II.

Nor yet suppose, my gentle reader, I
Would wish for any reason to be thought,
The least unmindful of her aid ; I'll try,
Indeed, to woo her, (as you'll find I ought)
For some rare beauties you'll read by-and-bye,
Altho' they were with no slight labour sought :
But hackneyed invocations now would be,
Offensive to my muse's dignity.

III.

Yet in the path divine of poesy,
Observances there are, 'twould be a sin
To disregard, or at least, a pity ;
The chief,—the good old custom to begin
A canto, in an introductory
And pleasing way ; which never fails to win,
That meed of praise from critics, authors need ;
(Myself especially ;)—but to proceed.

IV.

In love, as war, there is a casualty,
Obscured by destiny's dark veil, from sight ;
But which decides our fate, whate'er it be ;
In love, to penitence, or love's delight,
In war, defeat, or glorious victory ;
And so in truth it is in a sea-fight,
Where random shot, or e'en a breath of air,
May blight the brightest prospect with despair.

V.

As STANTON with his crippled harassed crew,
Were concentrated on the forecastle,
In eagerness to board, or to renew
The battle fray,—the two ships sudden fell
On board each other ; both their grapnells threw ;
When from the STRANGER burst a wild war yell—
A fury blast—a prelude 'twas to slaughter,
And then the SPHYNX was boarded, on the quarter.

VI.

"Twas an ill wind but no less sure that blew,
Their bows apart, their quarters in caress,
The moment STANTON forward led his crew,
To board ;—his after-deck left defenceless ;
The STRANGER boarded then :—he knew his cue,
And time,—well ;—as Phillidore says of chess,
“ Ere you attack your enemy be sure,
Yourself from *his* attacks are quite secure.”

VII.

Had STANTON borne in mind this sage counsel,
He very like might have averted this,
And other sad disasters that befell,
His harassed crew ; ’twas said, the fault was his.
(A princely game that chess ! I love it well !
I think the sweetest antidote to care is,
When sore oppressed with gloom and loneliness,
A friend and claret, and a game of chess.)

VIII.

Impetuous as the overwhelming surge,
Resistless rushing o'er the sylvan shore,
And crowded nooks upon the shelving verge,
Of drowning Ararat, when ocean bore
The ark of life, as seen first to emerge
From world expiring 'neath the deaf'ning roar,
Of waves and rain, so dash'd the STRANGER'S hands
On SPHYNX'S deck, in num'rous well-trained bands.

IX.

Then darted fury from the fiery eye ;
Dreadful the carnage was and fierce the fray ;
Soldiers and sailors eager seemed to vie,
In all the dangers of that bloody day ;
Until, as fate decreed, o'erpowered by—
O'erwhelming numbers, STANTON'S crew gave way ;
At first but slowly, then they fairly ran,
As if a panic seized them—to a man.

X.

But 'ere it came to this, young STANTON led
A handful of his men to whence there came,
The hottest fire, where strewed around with dead,
The STRANGER battled with unerring aim,
From pistol-shot and small-sword reeking red,
With life's warm stream,—his eye balls flashing flame :
He seemed to wear a talismanic life,
No wound had he tho' foremost in the strife.

XI.

Him STANTON singled out and made a thrust,
Expert as Angelo, at his sword side,
But which was parried easily ; (he must,
Have been a master swordsman ;) STANTON tried,
A feint—that failed ; then lunged home at his bust ;
But all his thrusts were parried well and wide ;
And ere a flash of thought, young STANTON bled,
And fell apparently as he were dead.

XII.

'Twas then, and not before, his o'ermatched crew,

(Without a leader) all were seen to flee,

Swift as the vanquished foe at Waterloo,

Or, (if you'd rather)—the plains of Cressy ;

They fled in short as fleet as most men do,

Or would, pursued by a fierce enemy,

Close at the heel, with pistol cock'd, and sword,

To slash, and will to throw them overboard.

XIII.

Some on the yard-arms ran and met their fate,

By pistol shot, and fell into the sea ;

Others, (among whom was the boatswain's mate,

The carpenter, some sailors and WANLEY),

Fled down below for safety, there to wait

Impending doom : Besides these, there were three

Young soldier-officers with their Colonel ;

And privates many, forced below as well.

XIV.

The STRANGER now complete possession had,
Of the doom'd SPHYNX ; and when her flag he lower'd,
He scornful smiled ; yet e'en his smile was sad,
And full of bitterness, until his sword,—
Was buried in its folds ; then,—seeming glad,
With laughter wild he hurled it overboard :
His crew the cabins rifled and cargo ;
While some the hatch-ways guarded down below.

XV.

He panted hard for breath ; for well he fought,
Performing wonders with his nervous arm,
And limbs symmetrically knit and fraught,
With veins and sinews such that well might charm
Canova's eye, whose chisel almost wrought,
E'en mind to flash from marble to disarm,
The stoic of his icy shield in fine,—
E'en to confess his Venus was divine.

XVI.

Where ZARA was he went ; he wore a brace
Of pistols in his girt, and in his hand
His sword he clasp'd ; he reached the gloomy place,
His fiery eye still flashing fierce command,
'Till meeting ZARA's form and fair-side face,
He stood transfixed as 'twere a fairy's wand
Had stricken him ; and leaning on his sword,
He gazed, as sadness o'er his pale brow lour'd.

XVII.

Her attitude of breathless sympathy,
Shed o'er her form a sanctuary shield,
As bending o'er the pale corpse pensively,
Her features from the STRANGER's view concealed,
She seemed as motionless as Niobe,
Though not a tear escaped her as she kneel'd,
Her head reclining on her bosom where,
Her hands were clasped as one engaged in prayer.

XVIII.

His glare, basilisk glance, rov'd o'er and o'er
Fair ZARA's form, until her beauteous eyes
Were raised towards him, (as I said before,)
In Heaven's gentleness : then wild surprise,
Or some new bane his burning bosom tore,
His visage blanch'd,—his bosom swell'd with sighs,
Big drops of perspiration dewed his cheek—
And breathing hard, he tried, in vain, to speak.

XIX.

The countenance of Hamlet when he first
Descries his father's spirit ; or of Lear,
When gazing as a lucid moment burst
Across his scorch'd brain,—on good Cordelia,
Who fondly tended him, though rashly cursed,
Were similar in trait—(save Hamlet's *fear*)
To STRANGER's visage as he cried wildly—
“ DE SOUZA—*haste ! —By Heavens !—It is she !*”

XX.

A tall swarth man black bearded to the nose,
And in his train a dozen dingy men,
Stood by the STRANGER when fair ZARA rose ;
The STRANGER eyed DE SOUZA, and he then,
In broken accents spoke, but Heaven knows
Fair ZARA's feelings, or her mother's when,
They spoke of *her* ; it would be vain in me,
To attempt to pourtray their poignancy.

XXI.

He grasp'd DE SOUZA's arm :—" Mark you," said he,
" That young and lovely seraph standing there ?
Dost not remember I revealed to thee,
When thou hast said my brow was dash'd with care,
A sylph-like form at midnight smiled on me,
When tossing restless, tortured with despair,
E'en sleep affrighted from my pillow flew,
And scorpion horrors darted stings anew ?

XXII.

“ Do'st not remember, man ?”—and here his tone
Of voice unearthly wild resounded thro',
The dreary death-strewed deck, as a deep moan
Burst from his lips, and c'en DE SOUZA drew
His breath in abject dread:—“ Dost thou not own,
That what I tell thee now is strictly true ?”
“ Yes,”—said DE SOUZA roughly, “ it is true :”
“ That form”—the STRANGER said, “ is—before you !

XXIII.

“ Her very hair—her brow—her eyes—her face,—
Her stature, dress, her heavenly figure,—
Her air—her features—all !—in her I trace
The same seraphic form that used to hover,
O'er my drear pillow ; nor can I efface—
The adoration I then felt for her ;
There's something strange in this !—'Tis Fate's decree ;
She will, DE SOUZA, save or ruin me !”

XXIV.

Just at this time a piercing female cry,
Burst on the terror-stricken, list'ning clan ;
And swift as thought, the STRANGER's searching eye,
Glanced on a giant limb'd and brawny man,
Who held within his grasp (sorry am I
To say)—fair ZARA's maid ;—the rogue began,
A rather belligerent kind of theme ;
Which good MARIA silenced, with a scream.

XXV.

Nature has gifted—(for wise purposes—
Of course)—the lungs of ladies with a shrill
And piercing note wherever danger is,
Or threatens them, which makes our bosoms thrill
With tumults wild and rife with sympathies ;
'Tis their alarum-bell, they sound at will ;
Tho' circumstances *may* arise, I deem,
The fair one's scream is other than it seem.

XXVI.

Swift o'er the STRANGER's gloomy visage spread,

A fierce reproving shade ; his dark eye threw

A glance, impressing all with abject dread,

As from his girt a pistol that he drew,

Was levell'd at the base intruder's head,

With steady arm and aim unerring true :

The bold intruder crouching, instant, low,

Averted by contrition, his death blow.

XXVII.

“ And is it thus !”—the STRANGER fiercely cried,

“ The strict injunctions which I gave to thee,

And to thy comrades that for me have died,

Who living dared not e'er disobey me ?—

And durs't thou thus, my strict commands deride,

Never to invade the sanctuary

Of women, or the wounded ? Hence !—Away,—

For like offence thy life alone shall pay.”

XXVIII.

The fellow sneaked aside, extremely glad
No doubt, in having freely 'scaped with life,
And limbs unscathed ; tho' seeming just as sad,
As husband who with passions very rife,
Suspects he has been treated rather bad,
By young and shrewish uncomplacent wife ;
Who in return for dutiful devoirs,
Receives uncompromising cuffs, by scores.

XXIX.

'Twas then the STRANGER eagerly whispered,
DE SOUZA's ear : his eye a meaning spoke,
As 'twere a threat of vengeance if he erred,
In some behest he chose not to revoke ;
DE SOUZA bowed, and spake ; but was not heard,
But smiled as one who hears, or means, a joke ;
What'ere was said, he instantly withdrew,
And all his clan from STRANGER's side and view.

XXX.

ZARA was near her mother, plunged in grief,
And tortured with anxiety and dread ;
She trembled as a lilac's tender leaf,
At Boreas blast ere vernal tinge is fled,
Without a trace or glimpse of near relief:
She feared not war—its horrors—nor the dead,
But shrunk beneath the STRANGER's basilical eye,
As bird 'neath serpent's gaze will twitter, droop and die. (2)

XXXI.

His pallid brow with gloom was deep depressed ;
There was a seeming sadness in his mien,
And measured step, that spoke the mind oppressed
With peace dispersed he never could regain ;
As if a nest of scorpions in his breast,
Incessant fretted him ; until his brain,
Had grown the seat of sickening mental care,
Of joy bereav'd, and harrowing despair.

XXXII.

He now advanced to seize fair ZARA's hand ;
She shrunk from him as if his daring touch,
Was worse than mere pollution, tho' his bland,
And polished air and manner then were such,
Scarce any other lady could withstand ;
(For gentleness with ladies will do much ;)
But ZARA stood aghast and terrified ;
Close clinging to her trembling mother's side.

XXXIII.

“ Nay—fear me not—fair lady—fear not me ;”
He said, in tone subdued to gentleness,
Tho' full of deep and poignant melancholy ;
“ You know me not ; nor little can you guess,
My state, my station, or my pedigree ;
I am not what I seem ; long weariness,
Of bitter woe hath shorn my youthful day
Of happiness, and pleasure's cheering ray.

XXXIV.

“ But, fear me not,”—and then once more he tried,
Her hand to seize, but was repulsed again,
By her wild terror glance, that still defied
His daring offer, with a proud disdain ;
Her trembling mother pressed her to her side,
Encircling her spare waist, as one who fain
Would shield her child from an assassin’s knife,
And it defend at hazard of her life.

XXXV.

“ No more of this !—I must—I will—have thee !
Thrice has thy seraph form from demons’ fire,
And fangs of Furies seized and rescued me ;
Thrice has thy melody and seraph lyre,
Thrill’d my drear bosom with an ecstasy,
That guardian spirits only could inspire ;
’Twas but a dream I thought until in you,
My saving spirit burst again to view.”

XXXVI.

Again he tried her hand to grasp : poor child !

It was in truth a fearful time for thee,
And worse for thy mother, whose wan and wild

Beseeching looks of speechless agony,
And hurried, terror-speaking glance of mild

Reproof, betrayed her love, as timidly
She stay'd the Stranger's arm : A piercing shriek
Burst from her lips altho' she did not speak.

XXXVII.

A sudden, glowing, but benignant smile,
Beam'd o'er fair ZARA's face ; as one appeased,
By real or fancied safety to beguile,

Grim terror of the pang her bosom seized ;
Altho' 'twas difficult to reconcile,

Appearances with facts, yet she seemed pleased ;
But, for an instant :—when her eye revealed
Some dark determined deed, as yet concealed.

XXXVIII.

And so it was : to Heaven her eyes were cast ;
She solemn rose, as from beneath her vest,
A poignard she then drew, she firmly clasp'd,
And resolutely pointed at her breast ;
The Stranger startled back and stood aghast ;
And doubtless would have essayed to arrest,
Her deadly purpose,—had not then DE SOUZA,
Rushed sudden from his hiding place behind her.

XXXIX.

She was disarm'd ; her fortitude fled then ;
In short, she fainted ; senseless as the dead,
The Stranger bore her, followed by his men,
To the main deck : the news like lightning spread,
'Mong SPHYNX's crew concealed ; while the drear den,
With female shrieks and wailings, resounded ;
In vain her mother scream'd in accents wild,
“ O, sir !—respect my poor—my only child.”

XL.

Thus, screaming, she sunk down, apparently
Bereaved of life ; the stranger hurrying bore,
His senseless burden with an ecstasy
Of wild delight, scarce ever seen before
To light his marble-brow of melancholy ;
But when he gain'd the deck, fierce Fury tore
His heaving bosom like a volcano,
And blanch'd his visage white as virgin snow.

XLI.

He stood, inanimate, as one struck dumb :
Amazed, he saw his men carousing o'er
A case of Hollands and a cask of rum ;
Some, brawling, 'mid the bacchanalian roar
Of hideous laughter—horrid oaths—and some
Bereaved of sense, lay down ; and three or four,
Cried out—" a health to DUROC, and success !
Long life to him, and to his new mistress !"

XLII.

Many, indeed the most of them had ta'en
Their swill, and lay on deck inanimate,
As 'twere they too were numbered with the slain ;
And those who still could speak, were so elate,
They could not from their wassails yet refrain,
But seem'd desirous at any rate
To carouse while they could ; till from below,
A shout of strife arose, and battle woe.

XLIII.

Whether it was the fierce heart-rending shriek
That burst from ZARA's mother, or the wail
Of soldiers' wives,—MARIA's terror-scream,—
Or one or all that turn'd the battle-scale,
And roused the SPHYNX's crew, reduced and weak,
Their fierce relentless victims to assail,
It matters not : with vengeful passions rife,
They rose upon them, fighting to the knife.

XLIV.

They simultaneous sallied, as it were
By preconcerted signal, from below,
As war-hounds fierce the flying game to tear ;
The conflict came, and blood anew did flow ;
And loud the mercy howlings rent the air,
From pirate men, who met their mortal blow ;
The Colonel led his soldiers gallantly ;
The sailors headed were by young WANLEY.

XLV.

Onward they rush'd, now flush'd with victory !
The panic stricken foe before them ran
To gain the deck, pursued by young WANLEY,
With all his small but now elated clan ;
Many were cutlass'd ; some leap'd in the sea ;
The deck once more was shorn of a foe-man,
Except the STRANGER, who abaft stood calm,
With senseless ZARA clasp'd within his arm.

XLVI.

Short was the respite he received from men
Who thirsted for his life with direst hate,
Who long'd to gloat their fury on him then,
Their vengeance for defeat to satiate
With nothing less than mortal pang ; but when
They sudden closed on him to seal his fate,
And pistol muzzles threatened him, then he,
Before him ZARA held, exultingly.

XLVII.

His visage now from passion was as free,
As though he felt no fear, nor knew a care ;
Unless the flashes momentarily
Fierce darting from the keen and hurried glare
Of his large dark and fiery eye might be,
Construed by some to indicate despair :
The form of still inanimate ZARA,
Seem'd light in his arm, as a mere feather.

XLVIII.

As bear at bay he stood on the taffrail,
Confronted with a file of pointed steel,
And levell'd fire-arms, ready to assail
Whenever opportune ; but ZARA's weal
And safety, then forbade : of no avail
Were foemen's menaces that he should feel
The " sting of instant death ;" he lowering, kneel'd.
Upholding ZARA as a safety shield.

XLIX.

" Strike—dastards—strike ! or fire ! if you dare—
Approach me not, too near," he scoffing said.
" That instant you molest, or harm a hair
Of my now fallen and degraded head,—
This girl shall fall a corpse,—and so beware !
Upon your heads I hurl my fierce hatred ;
I scorn your nation—this I frankly own—
Nor care I for myself, but her alone."

L.

And, scowling fierce, he instantaneously,
As one who vainly strove to reconcile
The frown of Fortune with necessity,
Raised his fair burden with a haggard smile,
Expressive of contemptuous irony,
And dash'd into the sea 'mid fierce revile;
Relinquishing fair Zara's form, who then
Was caught and cherish'd by the SPHYNX's men.

LI.

And, as he fell, the shade of evening drew
Its misty curtain o'er the slumbering sea;
The circumambient foam around him threw
Their myriads of phosphoric gems as he,
Made stoutly for his bark: the SPHYNX's crew
Kept up a lively fire of musketry,
Without effect; (3)—he swam, with firm sinew,
'Till space and darkness veil'd him quite from view.

LII.

A gust of wind sprung up, the waters rose,
And darkness reign'd;—the moon was in her wane;—
The waves, portentous wore the swell and throes,
Precursors of a storm;—a fall of rain
Patted the surface of the blue billows,
The wind fast freshning to a breeze again :
To the BLACK-DEATH all eyes were turn'd—but he
Had fill'd his sails, and stood away to lee.

LIII.

But WANLEY said, (and likely he was right)
He heard the Stranger hail them, in a tone
Of fierce defiance, to resume the fight ;
But, 'mid the seamen's cheers, and the loud groan
From many a wounded man, and coming night,
His busy duties, and the shrill, screech moan
Of the set breeze, he was not sure : a soldier said
His hail was this:—" *Again you'll meet the BLACK-DEATH'S*
HEAD !"

LIV.

Loud howl'd the wind; the sea-waves, hissing rear'd,
Their foamy crests in fierce and raging way;
Dark clouds o'erhung the heavens that appear'd,
Black as chaotic darkness, save a ray
Of palish light, to lee, the vision cheer'd;
But even it soon disappear'd, and a
Loud screeching peal of thunder rent the air,
Terrific fierce, as flashed the lightning's glare.

LV.

Now turn we for awhile to fair Zara:—

She still unconscious lay, as one who slept
Her final sleep, attended by her mother,
Who chafed her brow, as o'er her face she wept,
Till Zara's eye-lids open'd as from slumber:
Then from her heart to cheeks her blood fast crept,
As, rising languidly, a fond embrace,
Suffused with joy her ever-beauteous face.

LVI.

Still was there a strange wildness in her air ;
A hectic flush of crimson on her cheek ;
And through her eyes there flash'd a vivid glare
Of terror, as if 'twere she fear'd to speak
In language other than her sighs ; her hair
Dishevell'd fell : at last, in voice yet weak,
She cried—" *My mother!—and alive!—my mother!*"
They both then wept, for joy, o'er each other.

LVII.

And long they thus embraced in ecstasy
Of bliss, too sweet to be conceivable ;
Unless by those whose hearts, as theirs were free,
From earthly dross, or ever loved so well ;
But mortal joys are apt, too soon, to flee ;
And grief and bliss by turns our bosoms swell :
The tears they shed, when stay'd, would flow again ;
But theirs were tears of pleasurable pain.

LVIII.

The "pleasure tear's," a genial offering,
From hearts o'erflowing with a mutual joy;
The germ of innocence ere youth takes wing,
And vernal sweets delight, without alloy;
Ere uncorrupted years have known the sting,
Allied to care, when life and pleasures cloy;
And their's the essence was, of, love, that springs—
From fervent hearts,— "divested of his wings."

LIX.

The wind now fiercer blew and lashed the main,
Into a waste of foamy hissing brine;—
Each wave high towering as a huge mountain:
The darkness fled at last; the night grew fine;
The rain had ceased; the stars their light again
A lustre twinkled on the moon's decline;
The clouds dispersed, yet threatening, swiftly flew,
In the scuds' wake, as shrieked the wild seamew.

LX.

At night the wounded men engrossed the care
Of all the crew who down below were ta'en ;
Among them STANTON lay, his bosom bare,
And pale and haggard 'neath a heap of slain ;
His wound a flesh one was, severe, and there
Arose a whisper that he ne'er again
Would tread the SPHYNX's deck, or ever view
The light of day, which griev'd his faithful crew.

LXI.

'Twas well for him, the corpse that o'er him lay,
His wound compressed, and stay'd the bleeding as
The purple gush was ebbing fast away ;
It saved his life in fact ; and, as it was,
He rallied fast ; for, on the following day,
He took command despite of Boreas ;
Then " Captain " crown'd—a " Monarch " for awhile—
His step-stone, Bravery, and Fortune's smile.

LXII.

The SPHYNX heel'd to the storm, and bore away
Beneath a lowered canvas : on she sped,
Swift o'er the foamy wave, 'mid many a
Howling squall, she all the night contended ;
Nor strain'd a spar or tie 'till break of day,
When damaged stays and shrouds were refitted :
Then for the BLACK DEATH sought they eagerly,—
And as a mere speck saw him far to lee.

LXIII.

The late Captain and the dead, were buried,
With decorous and due solemnity ;
That is, the service o'er them all was read ;
And they in hammocks sewed and ranged to lee,
With weights attached of gun-shot and of lead,
Were cast lamented in the briny sea,— (4)
Their mortal grave :—It was a sorry sight,
As howl'd the wind, and closed the shade of night.

LXIV.

The soldiers' wives—poor souls—were sore depressed
With fear and grief; for loss of husband some,
And others from affright and want of rest;
The crews' triumphant cheer was a welcome,
As sweet as ever soothed a terror breast;
But words of solace, and a little rum,
With *aqua puræ* sugar'd, rous'd anew
The languid smile, and cheer'd the SPHYNX's crew.

LXV.

Then under close-reef'd topsails on she flew,
Swift as a falcon, o'er the mountain wave;
Now in the abyss of huge seas she threw
Her keel in air, (6) and pitched and mounted brave,
The terrifying summit, where it blew,—
A deaf'ning blast :—Again, in the concave
Of mountain seas she sunk, again, to rise,
On fearful summit verging to the skies.

LXVI.

The silver scud swift darted through the sky,
As night its mantle o'er the ocean drew,
Obscuring from the watchful seaman's eye,
The twinkling stars at intervals from view ;
The fire-gem'd foam to lee was seen to fly
In boiling flakes ; the wind terrific blew ;
'Till solar beams dispersed the mist of night ;
The BLACK DEATH then no longer was in sight.

LXVII.

And as the next eve closed, a gorgeous hue
Of gold and purple burst from farthest West,
Illumining the sky of spotless blue,
With glorious images profusely dressed,
As Sol majestic disappeared from view,
Beneath the mountain-billow's rolling crest ;
O ! 'twas a glorious sight !—Pray go to sea—
If scenes comparative you wish to see.

LXVIII.

The moon was in her wane ; the stars alone,
On the wide ocean shed a silvery ray
Of light, and they with vieing lustre shone,
Most mild and beautiful;—at dawn of day,
The wind from fierceness dwindled to a moan
Of gentleness, and died, at length, away ;
'Till mountain-seas their maiden aspect bore,
Serene and playful almost as before.

LXIX.

Then all the ports were hauld up fore and aft ;
The decks were wash'd, the sails to crouding set,
Were filled with balmy breeze ;—the sailors laugh'd
At dangers they had passed—(they soon forget
The battle and the storm ;)—but, as they quaff'd,
Their grog with glee, 'twas found they were not yet
From Fortune's malice free ; in fact, they were—
(As they too long had been)—short of water.

LXX.

They might have had about (or little more),
Some three weeks allowance on board of her ;
But as they still were west of Afric's shore,
Close haul'd upon a steady south-wester,
With no near port nor bay at hand, they bore
Away direct for fam'd St. Helena ;
That gem of rocks ! the grave of One whose fame,
A marvel was on earth,—as his wild name.

LXXI.

They squared the yards, trimmed sails, and bore away
Before the zephyr, fair, and mildly bland ;
The past forgot, the crew were blithe and gay,
And danced at eve as play'd the Colonel's band ;
And thus they sail'd until the fourteenth day,
When from aloft a lad espied the land ;
A cheering sight ! it lit the pleasure smile,
And banish'd widow's wailings, for a while.

LXXII.

And thou, my lovely ZARA—even thou—
As, too, thy mother, twined around thy heart,
Fond as the ivy o'er the green shade bough,—
Hadst ceased to feel the sting of terror's dart,
Though pensiveness still hover'd o'er thy brow;
Of that—no more, for you and I must part;
The wind is fair—the land in view—farewell to thee!
For ever or awhile, whiche'er the Fates decree.

LXXIII.

Whate'er thy future destiny may be,
By fortune spoil'd, or harrow'd by despair,
Stung by the venom of adversity,—
Or sooth'd by love, or blighted by its care;
Whether thy wayward stars award to thee,
The perils of the sea again to dare,—
Or if the BLACK-DEATH, or her captain's yell,
Again appal thee, time alone may tell.

LXXIV.

Lovely and guileless, youthful as thou art,
Thy smile as cheering as the orient sun,
Within thy bosom bearing a fond heart,
As ever beat, or man's affections won,
Still 'tis imperative we now must part :
Thus far, the burden of my tale is done :
And I must say—"farewell," to my sweet flower,
And past companion of my evening hour.

LXXV.

Now off! my pilot poem,—soar in air!
Mount! aërial ZARA! naught thy flight deters,
Except thy fancy flights, and some there are,
Which doubtless will be "wing'd" by Reviewers;
My courteous readers! I have taken care
To cater for you well (barring errors);
And should my maiden-poem please, we may
Again perchance meet at no distant day.

LXXVI.

I think I may say I have ta'en you thro',
Our interesting story with—*eclat*;
The theme at least is altogether new ;
(I really think it will be popular)
My kindest friends!—my purchasers,—thank you !
And you, my very urbane Publisher ;
On authors all whose works are,—*sure to sell*,
Your smile is sweet beyond a parallel.

LXXVII.

In friendly terms I wish you all good bye,
As friends I trust we may yet meet again ;
(Of that the public will decide—not I) :
Strange things are yet untold, and I would fain
Resume my story ere my ink is dry,
But health and spirits now are on the wane,
With me;—yet still my little book I feel,
A lively interest in thy future weal.

LXXVIII.

Thy course I'll watch believe me with the eye,
Of a fond author's love ; whate'er thy fate,
Whether to live a glorious day—or die,
Unread—unsold—unknown,—or to create,
A “ very great sensation,” by and bye,
And to become a favourite with the great,—
Still art thou mine, fair ZARA ! now, away :
Go, gain a name, and—BRILLIANT BE THY DAY.

NOTES TO CANTO IV.



NOTES TO CANTO IV.

STANZA I.

- (1) “ *There was a time the sober sage Hindus,
Were slaves to custom ; in the present age,
Old usages are going out of use,
And, e'en with them, reform is quite the rage.*”

It is pretty generally known (nor can the wider dissemination of the fact create any other feeling in the minds of Englishmen than delight) that the Hindus are becoming more and more attached to our institutions ; that the enlightened portion of them take pride in frequenting our public and private assemblies ; and that many of our domestic customs are imperceptibly, but surely, gaining ground among them. Their fondness for European equipages, and their surprising intelligence engaged, since the introduction among them of native, and the increase of English newspapers, in scrutinizing into every thing European, especially into every thing English, demonstrate the fact ; and the ready (it may almost be said *grateful*) aid with which the influential among them have promoted the greatest and truest reform that ever blessed the regions of the East—the abolition of suttee, entitles them (considering the prejudices under which they labour) to a degree of credit at least

equal to that to which those may lay claim who incurred the responsibility and risk of carrying that great and important measure into execution. In short, the Hindus have changed in almost every respect, save in religion and in dress : and in those particulars, time or a miracle alone (in the author's opinion at least) can perform a change.

STANZA XXX.

(2) "*As bird 'neath serpent's gaze will twitter, droop, and die.*"

The opinion once generally received, and still current in India, of birds being *charmed* by the eye of the serpent, and, in consequence, falling into their fangs helpless and inanimate, is a superstitious opinion. Many, it is true, have been the instances under the observation both of the author and of his friends, in which the serpent, in an attitude similar to that which it assumes in a state of excitement, when (preparing, for instance, to spring at a man), having eyed a bird, has been disturbed and driven away by passers-by, the bird actually *dropping dead* from the tree ; it is, however, no *charm of the eye* which produces this effect, but simply terror in excess. The mere sight of a serpent of the larger species might produce results equally fatal to creatures more courageous than birds. The eye of the serpent possesses peculiar brilliancy, and is remarkable for its beauty. In the East India Company's museum, and nearly facing the entrance-door, there is (or was) a serpent twined round a branch, and its eye would convey a fair idea of the power and beauty of the animate organ.

STANZA LI.

- (3) “ *The Sphynx’s crew*
Kept up a lively fire of musketry,
Without effect.”

This is by no means a singular instance of a seaman dashing into the wave from an enemy’s ship, and escaping the effects of the enemy’s fire by diving and swimming, until he has reached his own vessel in safety.

STANZA LXIII.

- (4) “ *And they in hammocks sewed, and ranged to lee,*
With weights attached of gun-shot and of lead,
Were cast, lamented, in the briny sea—
Their mortal grave.”

A sea burial is perhaps one of the most impressive scenes which it is possible to conceive. The position of the corpse, sewed in its hammock, to which weights are suspended, and which is placed on a grating, with its attached cordage, at the lee-gangway, ready to be cast into the sea at the appointed time; the decorous demeanor of the assembled crew, all uncovered; the reading of the burial service—and the impression conveyed to the mind by the words, “*We therefore commit his body TO THE DEEP,*” accompanied by the instant plunge, cannot be easily eradicated from the memory of the most careless observer.

STANZA LXV.

(5) “ *Now in the abyss of huge seas she threw
Her keel in air.*”

The imagery of this Stanza was presented to the mind of the author by the recurrence to his recollection of a spectacle of which he was an eye-witness when a boy. He was on board an East Indiaman, homeward bound, in company with the *Sealeby Castle*, Captain Harrington; and when off the Cape a storm arose, which endangered the safety of the ships. In the midst of the storm the wind lulled, and a fresh gale of equal fierceness arose from a quarter differing but by a few points from that of the former gale. The change soon caused a cross-sea of frightful magnitude, which made the ships labour and pitch to a degree beyond conception. It may be deemed “prodigious” to the critics of the shore, and even to some few old seamen it may be startling, but it is a fact that the *Sealeby Castle*, a ship of 1,200 tons burthen, and carrying from 1,600 to 1,800 tons, pitched with a violence which, on her rise, caused her to rebound absolutely out of the water *fore and aft*, her keel being distinctly seen by every one on board ship with the author, so that for a second or two she was actually between heaven and earth. This singular and fearful effect however occurred but once, nor is any similar one likely to occur again.

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